

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 1

ELLSBERG: I've asked Richard Alpert, Ph.D., Baba Ram Dass, I mention the Ph.D. because we both share a background here, which I'll...I'll mention in a moment. Some of you...I don't think any of you need an introduction to him, but you may need an introduction to us. But we propose to talk to each other tonight. Not obviously, entirely informally, because this is going to be recorded and we'll see what comes of it. And if we think it's worthwhile it may be a chapter or some other part of a book that we're doing together, which in turn came out of a symposium or seminar that we gave together at Llama Institute in Mexico, which in turn followed a dialogue that we had again in front of this...in front of video cameras, and tape recorder, on our first, essentially our first meeting, which I notice...I just noticed the date, February 9th, 1982, so it's two years ago. We really, the original idea of the book from the Llama discussions was that it would be in the form of a dialogue. It's not clear that it has evolved in that way at this point. For various reasons, the actual direct dialogue that we had on that occasion wasn't our best to...to come out as well as we hoped. And so we were left at this moment with two essay like discussions, which don't relate as clearly to...in

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 2

the eyes of the reader, I think, as was clear to people which took part in the symposium, which took...which took three days. This is of course a very condensed form of that. So I was talking to Ram Dass yesterday, and suggested that we get together in this area for the final discussion to sum things up between us, and mentioned that I was giving this class, and the thought occurred to me to invite him to, that we have the discussion in front of the class. Especially since some of you heard me refer to the influence that our earlier discussion had on my own thinking and understanding our relation to the leaders who do the things I've been describing. And actually that effect of the discussion on my thinking was not shown in this...in this manuscript, as of course, that reflected a lot on the discussion and the impact involved over time after that. So it was important to have that representing the book some way. So what we propose here is a truly open-ended and unscripted and unscheduled discussion. We don't have an agenda, either of us. And...but to see what our reflections are on our various discussions together. And Ram Dass is going to ask because he's not met you before, to have the opportunity to start out.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 3

WOMAN'S VOICE: Yes, absolutely.

ELLSBERG: We agreed that that....

WOMAN'S VOICE: Yes, we did agree.

ELLSBERG: So let me though just give a fast introduction beyond what I just said to the two of us so you'll know what you're hearing. By the way, how is this position? Can you hear pretty well? Is it good for you to be behind us?

We have really only met maybe six or seven times, and very much to my regret, because both of us are on the move a lot. I almost said, you more than me. But I'm not sure that's true.

WOMAN'S VOICE: It is true.

ELLSBERG: Neither of us are home very much. So we haven't had the chance to see each other much, as I would like to and Ram Dass would like to very much, I think, to see more of each other. And I hope that happens in the future. Oddly then, a lot of our discussion has been in front of other

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 3

WOMAN'S VOICE: Yes, absolutely.

ELLSBERG: We agreed that that....

WOMAN'S VOICE: Yes, we did agree.

ELLSBERG: So let me though just give a fast introduction beyond what I just said to the two of us so you'll know what you're hearing. By the way, how is this position? Can you hear pretty well? Is it good for you to be behind us?

We have really only met maybe six or seven times, and very much to my regret, because both of us are on the move a lot. I almost said, you more than me. But I'm not sure that's true.

WOMAN'S VOICE: It is true.

ELLSBERG: Neither of us are home very much. So we haven't had the chance to see each other much, as I would like to and Ram Dass would like to very much, I think, to see more of each other. And I hope that happens in the future. Oddly then, a lot of our discussion has been in front of other

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 4

people, like this. Usually organized by someone else, who brought us together for discussion. But the point that might...that I wanted to mention before Ram Dass came in is that...and that we did discuss on our first meeting which is...by the way which is, a lot of which was printed up in a pamphlet. Was that shown to you at all?

WOMAN'S VOICE: No, I haven't....

ELLSBERG: I have it. Somebody made a pamphlet out of a large part of that discussion. But we came to each other, this is now two years ago, met, with great interest, for various reasons, but in part because of the...number...number of ways in which our lives parallel each other. We turned out to be exactly the same age. Our birthdays are one day apart. I'm older.

WOMAN'S VOICE: He wants you to give him due respect, he says for that one day.

ELLSBERG: And both involved...associated with Harvard. Both had at one point an academic career. I didn't pursue mine very far. Before I went to... before I went to the Rand Corporation. We both went

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 5

in the 60's through a rather...in the 60's and early 70's, through ceremonies of degradation, Harold Garfield's term. In this form pointed out to me being removed from teaching at Harvard just before final exams here, not being allowed to give final exams. In my case, being put on trial for 115 years since. Both, it occurred to me, as I described that, through acts that have some similarity for breaking rules. For breaking certainly what were interpreted as promises to organizations that we belonged to. And both for passing out an agency of enlightenment. In his case, acid, and other forms of mind expanding drugs. And in my case, what I... 'inside dope'.

[LAUGHTER]

ELLSBERG: And...which was intended...top secrets, both secret substances basically, that...are potentially to put the best light on it, which was fair enough I think from my perspective. Subversive...of traditional ways of thinking, and ways of thinking that supported authority, supported organizations, supported institutional practices, which led to Vietnam. After these ceremonies, our lives

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 6

in each case changed a good deal. So from...and I was particularly interested to meet Ram Dass, as I said, for one reason, because he was someone my age, who wanted to meet me. And I didn't find that common. Actually we are both quite isolated from our joint cold war generation. And...with the effect that I could imagine and it turned out to be true, that we are somewhat more isolated from our own age group given what we did, than we would be if we were in a different generation. But we're in the age...there's a word for age group, a sociological term, but we're in, an anthropological term....

RAM DASS: Cohort.

ELLSBERG: Cohort yeah. We're in a cohort that graduated from high school the year of the Berlin Crisis, around that period. The Berlin Blockade, I meant to say, '48, under Stalin, and that lived through the, was in college during the McCarthy Period and the Korean War. And most of our colleagues, many of them, were either in the reserves or in...went to Korea, and remained committed to a Cold War point of view to an unusual degree for the population as shows up in polls of...Most

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 7

subjects break the response down by age, and I find myself more isolated from my age group than any other age group on matters like the treaties or Vietnam, or Central America, or almost any other that you could name. We have...are closer in attitude to people younger than I, or older than I, on almost all positions. So I was looking forward to meeting somebody who actually, as I say, wanted to meet which was the case, and also because I had been seeking wisdom for ten years or so, around that time, to understand how I and many others of my generation and older, had gotten involved in destroying Vietnam and doing other things that had been revealed to us, more recently. And in building a nuclear apparatus. That I looked for wisdom wherever I had a chance of finding it. Mysticism in various forms was one of those areas, and Eastern and Western, Buddhist, Hindu and Christian mysticism. So I...while I had not at that point read much by Ram Dass I knew many people whose lives had been quite enlightened and transformed by him. So I understood him to be a wise man, which I found him to be. And that's where we are. We...I think I can say, we respect each other very much, like each other very much. We hope to know each other better

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 8

including the course of this evening.

RAM DASS: Well, my involvement with this issue started some years back, through a friend named Allan Ginsburg. And I was on tour, lecture tour, and I was to speak in Boulder, Colorado, and Allan called me and he said that there was going to be a demonstration at a place called Rocky Flat and that there was going to be a group of Buddhists that were going to sit there in meditation, and he was to lead them away, and that he was unable at the last minute, I don't know, illness or some... to be there, he would be in New York. And he heard I was going to be in Boulder, and would I mind doing this for him. And that was my introduction to my active involvement in anti-nuclear activities. And I've got to say that my motivation was that I had become aware that when you work on your self spiritually, you can...you...in order to do certain practices, you extricate yourself from the...a number of parts of your life, in order to go within. And then you arrive at a place where you see that if you push away anything in the universe, it has you trapped. And that you end up, it's called, to push away form for formlessness. Or push away formlessness for form. Both of them are attachments of the mind.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 9

And they leave you trapped in your mind. And I'm now talking very technical talk about spiritual practices. So I recognized that there were a number of parts of my life that spiritual work... my not dealing with those was justified by my spiritual work. But it wasn't justified in the sense if I really wanted the spiritual work to get me free, OK? It was justified, it could get me high, but it couldn't get me free. And I realized that there was a distinction between getting high and getting free. And I realized finally that I wanted to be free. I didn't want to be just high. I could get high, and I'd come down and get high, and I would come down. That was it. I used drugs, I used yoga. At that time, India, I had done all of that, so....So I realized that it had to be so that my consciousness was even and clear and present in every part of my life, in my sexual life, in my emotional life, in my father, in my family, with my social-political life, that I couldn't walk away. And I...what I noticed in my audiences, who were younger people for the most part, in those days, was that some of them came to hear me because they sensed there was something that they hadn't tasted. And they sort of wanted to awaken into something that they sensed possibility of. And

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 10

for them I was saying, get high, relax, loosen up, you know, turn on, come on, let's go. And let go of your mind for a bit. Meditate, whatever. Go to India, do whatever, dance...sing... And the other half of my audience had found how to do that and they were losing their ground. That they were out there and they didn't want to play on earth, so to speak. And I was in effect saying to them, what do you say, get your act together, learn your zip code, get a job, come on down to earth. So half of the audience I was trying to push out. And the other half I was trying to bring down. And I saw that in my own actions, I was still holding on to enlightenment and pushing away, in Buddhism it was called, "samsara, nirvana". I was holding on to nirvana, and pushing away samsara, or pushing away the forms in life. So I knew as I looked that one of the things I was pushing away was the social-political realities. I was just not giving them the kind of juice and consciousness that a citizen and a representative of democracy should do. So I mean I was willing to vote...and I would now and then write a letter to a congressman and that was about it. That was about the extent of it. And I would give to charitable things that felt good. I'd write a check. I kept my distance

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 11

through my checkbook. And I knew that I wanted to get more involved. But I realized that I am so much a Westerner that does what's called 'intellectual overkill', that is you see where you want to go, and then you make believe you're there before you're there. And you start to act like you're there, and then this reaction sets in because you head tripped your way in, rather than coming in out of a true sort of readiness to do that. Am I talking so you can understand what I'm saying in here?

RAM DASS: So...I was waiting and I felt that if there was to be, and this is an interesting issue about waiting, that I think we want to talk about, but...because I found myself saying, let the situation pertain itself to me. I'm not going to grab it. Because I didn't trust where I was going to grab it from. I was going to grab it out of guilt or out of a feeling of righteousness, or out of a feeling of I'd like to do it because I don't look good in my own eyes as to who I'm supposed to be. All those kind of motives. And they just...they weren't enough to live by. They weren't the kind of motives I wanted to work from. So here Allan came along and offered me this, so I went

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 12

out to Rocky Flats, and I sat in the rain meditating. We walked and sat, walked and sat, and while I was sitting there, on the stage, Helen Caldicott was speaking. And I heard Helen Caldicott talking about the urgency and the fear. And as I was sitting there it was a very interesting way to hear a lecture, because I was sitting in meditation. And it was just sort of wafting through me along with the rain and everything else. I mean that's what happens in meditation, just all this space is created, which all the images come in and go out. And what I heard was, what helped me like...all I could...the first reaction was old fashioned. It was trying to coerce the audience by emotional means. And I thought, aren't we beyond that? Aren't we at the point where we can just say to each other how it is, and trust that we will do what needs to be done? Do I have to play upon your fears and your paranoia in order to get you to act? That's treating another human being as an object. And somehow, because of the drug experience that I had, I stopped doing that. But I speak to my own...I don't assume that I have to manipulate to get anywhere. I share with them what I know, and they do what they do and I do what I do. And

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 13

I...it's a certain kind of respect for...for other human beings. And as a lecturer, that's an interesting one, because you have to look exactly at what your axe is to grind, and your axe in this case is merely to share the information, and trust and respect other people. So I felt that although I felt that Helen was very genuine and warm and a caring human being, it felt to me like if there was going to be some change in this situation it was going to take a more conscious approach than what Helen was doing. Because I looked and I felt the time, and I continue to feel that the root issue behind the nuclear bomb is fear. To use fears to get rid of fear is...is absolutely idiotic. I mean it's just perpetuating the root cause. And you may get rid of one symptom but that's not going to solve the problem. So...I went through that. And then I started to hang out with different people that were involved a little bit. But I didn't get terribly involved. And then the opportunity came along to meet Dan. Now I came out of a time when Dan represented to me somebody who had an incredible amount of courage to override, I mean in Milgram's experiments, Dan was the guy that says, I'm not going to shock the dog, damn it. He was willing to stand up, and he

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 14

counted about something. And I remember my feelings about him when he did that, and I was so awed by the fact that I could meet him, that I went out and I got an offering of cheese and wine and I brought it up, and I was going to see my social political guru really, and I was bringing my offering. And he said, I'm very pleased to meet you, which blew my mind, since I didn't have a perception of myself. So we were off on a good track. We both were happy to meet each other. For our egos, that was very important. Well we've done some dances together, and this video and the workshop, and we've each written, edited our material for this book. And there are a number of issues that we... we are going to try to join this evening if we can. It's a little tricky to do that, but we're going to try. And I'll just take a couple of more minutes just to give you...we'll...

ELLSBERG: Could I just mention? I propose...I know a lot of you have to leave at 9:30...what is it right now?

WOMAN'S VOICE: 9:30 is when you should....

MAN'S VOICE: 8:15.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 15

ELLSBERG: If it's OK with you, and I didn't have a chance to discuss it, we can...we'll just go on talking, and you're all welcome to stay.

RAM DASS: Leave whenever you want to.

ELLSBERG: Stay or leave, I mean, whenever you have to. And also...I should also mention, I think we do want to get to a real dialogue between us, and maybe even...maybe do it together. In which...but that does not mean that people should not comment. And if, I think either of us feel, because of the purpose, if this is OK, unless there is a rebellion against this idea, we would say that we would take...keep the power for you to postpone some issue or to put aside or continue with what we are going on with. But I would like...I would like people to raise points that they like, and I think that would enrich the dialogue.

RAM DASS: You are like the fair witnesses who keep us straight.

ELLSBERG: So take your time.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I have a question, are you going

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 16

be here Thursday?

RAM DASS: No, just tonight. This is a one shot deal.

RAM DASS: When, in the 60's, there was a very clear bifurcation between the social activists and spiritual people, and it developed in the late 60's and went through the 70's and was certainly active during the Vietnam and the Vietnam period. You either were Jerry Rubin or you were, somebody like me. You had a choice of which way you went. And there was no in between. We all knew each other, but we were all putting each other down roundly. And by the 70's, we all began to realize that we all were losing by polarizing this thing so much. That we each needed each other, and we needed what each other's wisdom was. So that they began to work on themselves more inwardly, and I began to get more involved in social...social endeavors, and through my foundation. And...so when I came to dialoging with Dan, I was trying to examine why the spiritual movement does or doesn't participate in political or social action. And whether it should or shouldn't or can or can't. Or whether...if there's something inherent in it

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 17

that would make it not do it. Or what it is. And as you begin to awaken spiritually, which means to acknowledge that there are domains of your awareness that are not...that are independent of your linear, analytic intellectual process. That there's another domain of your being, which you can call intuition, you'd call something, you can call it higher awareness, you can call it cosmic consciousness, you can call it God, you can call it what you want. Because the words are not what it is. But you touch it, you may touch it through sex, drugs, the...looking at the stars, whatever, you touch it...you touch it through poetry, you touch it through something. And then you even treat it, in most cases in society as aberrant. As I was out of my gourd, or I was psychotic, or I don't know what happened to me, I was confused, or you see that that is a statement of another reality. And you might, if you start to awaken, that isn't just a lesser reality, or a time off reality, or a dream reality. That is an equally valid reality for the reality you have been living in, which has been based on your senses and your thinking mind. And you begin to move into a social/perceptual domain, which is what Einstein did with physics in moving it from

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 18

absolute reality to relative reality. So you move into seeing the physical plane as relatively real. And you experience that, so you see that this has a number of dimensions. You can call it mythic, archtypal, then you go on and on, and you can just pile them up, one after the other. Now once you see that, a lot of the literature that previously seemed like gobble-de-goop to you becomes, starts to mean something to you. I mean I...the Eastern literature meant very little to me before I started to have these experiences, and once I had them it meant a great deal more. Books like the Tibetan Book of the Dead or the Bahagavad-Gita or something like that, or the Vedas, things like that. And what I saw was that there were... what we had developed as...in thinking, sensing beings were very highly conditioned, habituated reactive organisms, that were functioning in very lawful ways, in which there was very little free will. And there was very little space. We were very reactive, built on our early experiences, built even on earlier times, if you want to go that far out. And that when you acted that way, you were acting...because you were acting with certain kinds of motivational structures, which means that you were attached to getting something

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 19

for your act. I mean attached the proofs to the action, as the Bahagavad-Gita points out. And you were thinking you were the doer. You were identified with being the actor all the time. The result was that you were actually creating a lot of waves in what you were doing in life, called creating karma, in Eastern terminology. But you say you were creating reactions, so reactions are creating reactions, and you begin to see that you are part of a locked in system in which nothing much is happening. It's all just kind of mechanical run-off. And as you awaken out of that, you sense the possibility that you could rest your awareness outside of that linearity of habitual reactivity, and be in a space from which you could...acts would occur out of you that would be responsive to the situation rather than reactive to it in a habitual sense. Am I getting through or is this too heavy duty? Do you get what I'm saying?

RAM DASS: So once you start to do this work on yourself. You start and go inward. And you see everytime you get caught back in the attachment to your ego identity, and this is now, I'm dealing with funny stuff here for a psychology-psychiatry group, because I'm showing ego as a structure

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 20

of mind that is functional and efficient sometimes or designed to be on a certain plane of reality. But it is not the only part of your identity and it is not the only way to see the universe. And once you realize that you are something other than your ego, you see that as these, as they say in the East, 'the ego is a lovely servant, but a lousy master.' And as long as you are under this, who am I, am I enough, will I achieve, all of the... and I had a heavy Jewish middle-class Newton achievement ego, that was very strong. And when I came up for air I couldn't believe this place, I just couldn't believe that there was a part of me that wasn't connected to that, because I had thought that was all there was. You may all know that, but I thought it was a big surprise for me, I'll tell you, the '60s. And once you see that, there is a tendency, when you come back and ask... when you're caught back in your fears and in your desires and so on, to see that your acts are really not bringing about necessarily the effects you wanted them to bring about. Not only that but your acts are...your acts are not cognizant of the entire existential situation. You do not have existential awareness at that moment. You have a narrow awareness that's conditioned by past experiences. And you are seeing out of very, very

structures. So there is a reticence to act in the world, because you keep wanting to work on yourself to become a pure instrument. Because you see the difference. You see that when you act out of attached ego, you bring about a certain effect, but as Gandhi said, "make yourself into zero and your power is invincible." That is when you can extricate yourself from your ego, so that your acts are coming out of another place, then it's like what Christ is talking about when he says, "not my but thy will". You're tuning to a higher drummer, if you will, and your acts are coming out of a very deeper intuitive space, in which it's obvious. It's sort of like the need to go to the toilet. It's obvious you don't have to think inside whether it's relevant or... or ought I or should I, you just go. And it's sort of that same, it can rise up out of a certain place. And you get so that as you have allowed yourself to live... realize the possibility, you could dwell in that domain, because you feel the power, the beauty, the relational quality of intimacy with the universe. You don't feel separated from the world by your mind. You feel like you are part of something instead of separated from it. And so there is a tendency to want to hold back and wait. And that's

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 22

really pretty much what the spiritual scene represents. It's saying, and Ramanamaharji, who was a great saint in India, represents that. He says, in effect, well what do we do about the world. He says, don't worry about the world, you don't even know yourself yet. When you know yourself it will be time to know the world. And that led to what we'll call 'the narcissistic 70's', which was...it filtered down from real spiritual work to sort of touchy-feely, groupy, Esalen-type growing things, which had their place for a certain group of people that was OK. But it wasn't the same. And they called them 'enlightenment intensives' for a weekend, which was kind of a joke from the point of view of what enlightenment is. So that now, what happens is that at some point you realize that you are not going to be that saint, that perfect enlightened being, by pushing away as I said something. You are going to have to be through embracing life, not by pushing it away. And it's not going to be that you embrace it, it's going to be how you embrace it. And so then you begin a whole different yoga if you will, that's called karma yoga. Meaning taking your karma, or the situation that exists, and using it as a vehicle to get free. So the only way that I work

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS

1 MAY 1984

SIDE 1, PAGE 23

in the world, since I am not an enlightened being is I'm working on myself in order to become a more pure instrument of higher consciousness in order to be more effective, but I'm doing that work on myself through the work I'm doing in the world, right? In other words, I demand a dual function for my actions. So I will put it very bluntly. I am involved in anti-nuclear work now, because I am working on myself, because as long as I am unconscious I am part of the fear that is perpetuating the fear, that is perpetuating the fear that we are all trapped. And therefore, my whole focus has been that unless you are using this to work on yourself, you are following the pigs over the...over the edge of the mountain into the ocean, right? So I see every act as an exercise in that sense. An exercise of how to act in...like when I lecture, I lecture night after night, after night, after night, city after city, and in each case I'm working with fame, with power, with money, with sexual opportunity. I'm working with it all until my heart can stay open, and I can be there and responsive without grabbing and all of the kinds of habitual reactions that one has to that stuff, that one gets lost in it. And one ends up suffering and being very isolated. And I've learned

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 24

a lot in these years, and it's been...it's been OK. So...Now I found out one more thing. And this is something that Dan and I really haven't joined yet, except peripherally, is that...Gandhi and I have worked...I mean I've really thought a lot about Gandhi. And he has another line, he says, "live simply that others might simply live". And I saw very clearly that you couldn't take an...a topic and treat it that discreetly. That if my life was full of violence in my interpersonal relations, was full of exploitation, of the have-nots in the world so that I could have my MG, and fly around in my airplane, and live a life of a certain way, and hold on to my king of the mountain status in this society, as my upper middle class background prepared me to do...That if I was going to perpetuate all of those things, and then go to try to bring peace to the world, I had to look again, because my life was going to have to have an integrity about it, because I couldn't with one hand be doing this wonderful compassionate work and at the other end be creating against the world, putting into the world, unconsciousness, exploitation of people, and I realized, and I came out of a tradition that just did it naturally. They never even thought about it. You never thought about it. And I had

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 25

dialogues with people like Steve Gaskin who runs the farm down in Tennessee, and he says things like, "Ram Dass, you are so middle class". And I heard, he's damn right I'm middle class, and you know, I talk with all kinds of...people who would keep showing me, Allan has shown me a lot about that. And I started to hear, because I...in India, my guru is somebody who had a pot, it was even a cracked pot, and he had a blanket that kept falling off, and he'd go into the jungle and he'd live in culverts. And it's hard for me out of the background that I have to hear that, and he just... I heard out of a tradition of keep letting go, letting go, letting go, so that the world becomes us at every dimension. Not just us here, but them there. And I had to examine every part of my life that demanded that I keep people away in order to protect it, because I realized that at that level I was not yet ready to play in the ballpark that the saints play in, OK? I mean I'm just putting it bizarrely, but that's the way I guess I would say it. So I think that the issue, and I wrote a preface for a book on voluntary simplicity, and I really explored about giving my money all away and about just living more and more simply. And I'm just learning how to do it. I'm just at the

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 26

beginning. Just at the beginning of learning how to do it. Because if you do it violently to yourself out of ought or should, you are doing that same thing of intellectual overkill and it has an reactive effect, it bowls you over. You've got to let it fall away. Once you realize you want to be free, and that money or car or attachment is holding you back....It may not be and then it doesn't matter... But if it is then you've got to look at it. You've got to work with it. So to me if we are going to act it has to be out of the integrity of our beings, it cannot just be a little part of our lives, and then we go home to something else. That doesn't work in my book. I'm nearly done. Another point that I made in the chapter, and then I'll stop and we can go to our discussion, was that, and I of course made the stuff that Joanna Macy^u made about opening to fear and doubt and anger and all of those things, and because our resistance to our feelings that the...there's a very subtle point that Joanna hasn't really made that I...think is an interesting one. When I look at what your material does to me, when you for example, tell me about, you know, Harry Truman, who to me was, go get 'em, Harry, type person, and tell me about his

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 27

role, and you almost say duplicity in a way, toward the public anyway. A myth of a childhood myth is hit, you know. And I feel myself resist. And then I feel myself feel upset about my resistance, OK? And I feel myself pushing against a...find myself not wanting to examine my own resistance. I want to react to my resistance by OK, I'll help you. But it's coming not out of opening to my resistance, do you hear that little place in there? So I really want to see what it means to open to the whole thing, emotionally, and stuff like that. And I realized a long time ago, and this is the mega-super opportunity, that working, I wanted to approach those things in society that scare me, that turned me off, that caught me the most. And that's why my foundation has a prison project. We work with multiple murder^{ers} in prisons. It has...we have a dying center, we work with terminally ill people. And I want to be with people when they are dying. I want to be with them when they are in pain. And I want to be with them when they are incarcerated. And I want to be with them when they are suffering. Not out of some kind of sadistic thing, but because that's the optimum opportunity for me to see what my secret stash of attachment is, where I'm holding

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 28

on to things. Where I'm not freely in the universe. Because some of those things go ugh, and I push away and I become, oh, let me help you in that professional warmth and that whole phony trip that we all know too well, and I can't bear it. And I demand of myself this truth. And I want to keep right on the edge of it. And this certainly is a big one right here. And represents for me one of my most feared edges and that's what I honor about Dan. That he's...he's relentless. Dan is relentless, I'll tell you. And I really honor that. It's hard work for me, I'll tell you. So, the last part of it I wanted to say was, what happened... We've evolved a certain kind of new kind of understanding of consciousness, that has emerged out of the 60's and 70's, and what's...it's called networking consciousness. It isn't coming just out of drugs, or...out of...it's coming out of the microchip and it's coming out of communications and transportation. The fact that we are all much more horizontal in relation to one another. There's much less vertical organization. There's much more communication. The have-nots are now your next-door neighbors. You can't push them away. The whole game is changing. And we don't have the power. We may still think, anachronistically, that we have

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 29

power, but we know it's anachronistic. The power is being re...re-defined in the world. And part of what these issues are is the turmoil that's engendered in an evolutionary sense, when you have an old system that is not so functional, and a new system that's emerging, and the old system isn't dying. It wasn't going to turn over and die and you've got this tremendous edge of the possibility of violence and total destruction. Now, so the networking consciousness which says, we're all in this stew together, is one that is helpful for getting us all involved, but it also is based on the idea that we are all separate. And as long as you are identified with your... I'm just going to give you the crash advanced graduate course in mysticism, as long as you.... as long as you are identified with your separateness, which is what happened when you ate the apple in the Garden of Eden, as long as you identify with your separateness you are frightened. And your motivation is for survival and for security, and for all the things that a separate entity does. But there is a part of you that is not separate. And that's what that other consciousness is about. It's pure awareness. It's cosmic awareness. It's whatever

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 30

it is. And actions that come out of that, are not coming out of fear. And what is...there is a confusion in the spiritual scene at the moment, because a lot of people are experiencing networking consciousness. They are experiencing that everybody is their brother and sister, but you are you and I am me. That's different from the place where I look into your eyes, there is only one of us. It just happens to have two bodies. That's a whole different place. And that one, a whole different set of acts come out of it. And my argument I think, to Dan is that although we can't wait for that, I'm not sure anything short of that is going to change the ballgame. OK? And that's why I'm demanding of myself the whole ballgame at this moment as I assume everybody else should be doing that understands this issue. OK, that's as baldly as I can present the whole thing. Here we go.

ELLSBERG: Now, Ram Dass, wanted to have the opportunity to speak to the class here tonight. And that wasn't to me, exactly. We need to talk, directly.

RAM DASS: Yes.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 1, PAGE 31

ELLSBERG: Because I do think we have differences in perspective that we need to clarify to each other, and really, erect a...So before we do that, I think we'll be speaking to each other on these issues, and I would hope that...I think, one reason that I mention that we have met a number of times and that we've talked and that we like each other, to make it clear, I think we should be prepared to jump right in, and have at it a little bit.

RAM DASS: Yeah.

ELLSBERG: Without giving the impression that we are being very....or asking...that we know each other well enough to do this.

BEGIN SIDE 2:

Q : ...fear and how you...what actually happens that enables the one person who says, I'm not going to shock the guy in the next room, what enables him to do that. A lot of the...that _____ you about what you did. And I would hope, you kind of brushed off, this idea...you brushed off this idea of the fear that underlies Caldicott's

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 32

arguments and underlying...and you've talked a lot about the fear that comes from stepping out of the inner sanctum. That's very important to me, at least I'm very interested in how people get active, and how people go through the transition that you are talking about. So I hope at some point, you get down to that about what it is that each of you from your different perspectives do about fear.

ELLSBERG: OK. Good question. More, any other comments at this point about what you would like to hear, or things that you would like clarified?

RAM DASS: Somebody else's tape recorder just clicked. You should know somebody is...

ELLSBERG: I'm raising this because there were people in the course who I think absolutely, totally, I sympathized with them. I'm just rereading some of the transcripts on this. Felt frustrated that I have lectured as much as I have. And that there hasn't been more interchange and more feedback and more discussion in class. And I think they're right. And therefore, I...what can I say, it's going to be like that tonight, to some extent,

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 33

in this case with the two of us. But...not totally,
so do please do...don't feel....

RAM DASS: Just break in if it feels like you are...
if something's....

ELLSBERG: If we're not meeting, if you hear us not
addressing some point....

WOMAN'S VOICE: I would like to hope that the issue
of urgency would get into this. Relative urgency.
Because obviously from what you said, Richard,
until individual consciousness really reaches that
point in which you and I look at each other and
are one, we not going to see that much seriously
happen of a good kind out there. My instant thought
is that that's going to take a whole long time, and
I don't know if this particular little planet is...

RAM DASS: Yeah. ...may not make it through.

WOMAN'S VOICE: May not make it. Now that may seem
OK to you.

RAM DASS: That's an issue, that's an interesting
issue, whether it seems OK to me.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 34

WOMAN'S VOICE: Right. Exactly. That's what I'm asking you to address.

RAM DASS: OK, that's one where I lose the audience.

MAN'S VOICE: I ask you to address, illustrate some of these actions, that have...emerged from your understanding, your sub...the development of your higher consciousness. I have a sense that you have acted out in some places. Then what is it that has come out in addition to, or as a product of working on yourself in this way, which I could then grasp as a concrete action, which is working against the whole phenomenon of the nuclear situation in that....

RAM DASS: You want?

MAN'S VOICE: And I can't ground your remarks as yet.

RAM DASS: Yes, I hear. I hear. I can...just a quick answer to that. For example, I find that as a result of the work that has happened to me in the past twenty years, my reactions or my way of dealing with death is entirely different than it ever was before. And that I am able, it seems to

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 35

me, with...I don't know how to say this without sounding strange about it, but...when I am in the presence of death my heart stays very open and I feel very safe, because I have a sense that what dies is not the individual being. And I am so connected to that part of me that doesn't die, not that lives on eternally, but that is not born, nor dies, that to me the issue of death is one that is so surrounded with fear, and I find myself able to be in that situation, and be in it in such a peaceful way, that people are able to quiet down enough to be at the moment of their death opening towards it like an adventure rather than pushing against it. And that to me is a very concrete example of what I changed in these twenty years. Now I've also grown older and I understand all that too.

MAN'S VOICE: Is that just a concrete example or is that the heart of the matter? That relation to death?

RAM DASS: No, I think it's a concrete example. For example my relation to my father has changed considerably as a result of this. Because I have stood, been able to stand back into the point of

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 36

appreciating the term, honoring one's parents, from a place of seeing the total warp and woof of things. And feeling, it's as if you...you stand back and you see that this leg isn't really comfortable down here and you've sort of got to get it together. And I changed my whole dynamic there. And started to meet him independent, since he's 85 and I'm 53, started to meet him both in the role of father and son, and independent of it. Not as other roles, but just independent of role, OK? And I never knew how to meet people independent of role before. The role was an entrapping thing. So that's a...to me another example of something that's changed. Although I would say that the issue of the fear of death or the...identity with that in me which is not vulnerable. Which is not coming and going, as they say. That...that is really part of the... that's about the essence of the matter.

MAN'S VOICE: I think you went half the way of what I was asking. You've changed the relationship... and your...the way you encounter, or relate to death. How have you changed and what have you done which is different from the rest of us, in relation to the nuclear holocaust?

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 37

RAM DASS: I don't know what the rest of you have done? I've probably done less than the rest of you have done. In terms of actions, I would say that I am...I'm not coming before you as an expert in this business. I'm coming as very much of a novice in learning, this is my teacher here. And I'm listening to hear how these two things come together at this point. That's where I am. I'm feeling that I've got to be here. That I cannot deny this any longer. But again and again there have been opportunities, when Dan has said, well, there's going to be an action at Livermore. Are you going to join us? And Wavy Gravy, one of my dear friends has said, we are all going to get arrested down at Diablo, and are you going to come? And in each case, I...there's part of me that wanted to do it, and I...this is a part of the issue I'm sure we'll discuss, I didn't trust my motives for doing it. I would do it in order to please Wavy, or to look good in Dan's eyes. But it wasn't coming out of a place in me that was ready to do that. And I kept...so I asked all my friends. What do you think about it? Do you think I should do an act of civil disobedience? And I got the most bizarre responses. Some people said, oh, that would

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 38

be wonderful. I mean in a very honoring way.
And others said, one woman...a Hollywood producer,
she's a woman, she said to me, it isn't modern.
Which is a fantastic response. And then somebody
else said to me, everybody doesn't have to throw
themselves in front of a train. There are other...
and you have a certain kind of legitimacy in
the society. Be careful what you do with it.
And I thought, until it's coming out of a place
that intuitively feels absolutely right, I can't
act. So here I am at this point. I mean that's
as straight as I can give you. Yes.

MAN'S VOICE: This last question, you mentioned
Bahagavad-Gita, and Gandhi, and I feel there is a
intersection there between you and Daniel in the
question of spirituality versus action, specifically
which also connects with Oppenheimer's quotation
from the Bahagavad-Gita, specifically when Krishna
says to Aljuna, "to act and fight, we are confronted
with kinsmen and relatives". So I am wondering
who he is told to destroy, how to interpret it?
How to differentiate from the obedient ethnic on
people, from Eichmann? What does that passage
mean to you? What implication for action versus
inaction does it have?

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 39

RAM DASS: It seems to me that what...when Krishna said to Arjuna, fight, because it's in the way of things. You've got to fight, because that's your part. You're Ashatria, you should fight. And Krishna says, I'm not going to do it. And then Arjuna...Arjuna says, I'm not going to do it. And then Krishna says, Krishna as God playing the role of the charioteer for Arjuna, Krishna says in Chapter 9, all right, I'll show you who I am. I'll show you how it is. And at that moment he opens what you might call Arjuna's third eye, or he opens his higher consciousness, and Arjuna sees the entire lawful relationship of forms in the universe, and how it all works, including him in it. It's as if you are busy being the star, and then you take one of those telescopes, he pulls you back and back until you see the Milky Way, and one of the stars is you. And you see, you're part of it all. And he showed him his part from another place. And from that understanding is where Arjuna acted. He didn't act as Krishna told him to act. He only acted after Krishna showed him, so that he too saw what it was about. And he acted then out of, well, now I see the reason. Like, for example, I used to be very frightened of suffering and pain. And I was very busy pushing it away

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 40

all the time, and I would never give it to anybody. But I'll be damned if I don't see clearly now that suffering is one of the most profound gifts in terms of the awakening spirit in people. Because I deal with people who suffer hellishly with all kinds of cancer, and various illnesses. And I watch them going from egos as thick as cinderblock blockhouses, and I watch this light come into them, and it is through their pain. And I wouldn't give it to them, but by god I begin to understand something and I'll be an instrument for relieving it at the same moment I understand its perfection. And that's part of that thing that's happened to me. Is the learning how to be acting in it to relieve it. And at the same moment be outside of it. It's like you act to make the universe better at the same moment you don't doubt God's perfection. And that paradox is one of the things of living in two realities simultaneously. And that's what... Arjuna was able to do only after Krishna showed him.

MAN'S VOICE: Which is very similar to God's answer to Job, which explains and does....

RAM DASS: Exactly right.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 41

DANIEL ELLSBERG: I'm ready to doubt that.

RAM DASS: OK, here we go. Let's go.

DANIEL ELLSBERG: No, actually, the questions that have been raised are questions that I would like to hear so...so we'll...

[MISCELLANEOUS CONVERSATION]

DANIEL ELLSBERG: I heard you talk, and of course, and those from whom you have learned some of the grief, talk about the perfection which you just referred to, the perfection as showed by Arjuna. Now that perfection includes in part, the Arjuna with whom Oppenheimer identified, when he saw the line from the Bahavagad-Gita, "I've come as death". He...he remembered it. I was just discussing that with a Sanskritist the other day, he said, checking something that I had heard elsewhere, the word is "^{Kālo}calla", which can be translated as death, although according to Mason, and Fritz ^{Steels}Falls, very rarely so translated. It could be translated as fate or death. Normally translated as time.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 42

RAM DASS: It's both. It's both, and they are the same.

DANIEL ELLSBERG: Yeah, the line...the line that Oppenheimer....Well, a lot of people would rather die at the hands of time. That's what I meant.... they'll take it in a form of time, somehow. They'll take their fate in the form of time, rather than in the form of atom bomb.

RAM DASS: As long as you are living in time you will die, and that's what the whole idea of rebirth is about.

DANIEL ELLSBERG: But you will not necessarily be murdered by other humans.

RAM DASS: No, how you die...we'll all die different ways. You might be murdered by a cancer cell.

DANIEL ELLSBERG: Exactly, and that's the distinction I want us to focus on. Now let me pursue that just a little. I don't want to cut you off. Dialogue is dialogue, I shouldn't object to them..... You have been seeing and experiencing death close up, of other people in your presence, and experiencing

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 43

with them empathetically, in a way that is new for you and it's changed your relation to the content of death. Now there are two ways in which what we are talking about...what we've talked about in this course so far is distinct from that general phenomenon. It's a little more specialized. First there is the possibility of what is on this planet, a new form of death, the death of the cell, the death of the cancer cells, actually. No more cancer afterwards. And a...a cure, it's a cure. It's a final solution for cancer, actually, possibly.

RAM DASS: Possibly. except the grass and the rocks.

ELLSBERG: Well no, but let's consider the possibility now as Shell does, that not even the grass survives. In nuclear winter, the grass may not survive. And so we have this possibility that everything goes. Now I want to put that aside for the moment because that raises the metaphysical questions of whether whether that is meaningful from your point of view, from the Hindu point of view, from a yoga point of view, that we can be sure...sure it will not happen strictly speaking. The universe may implode as a whole. May go back to the form...the...the original, into a speck, right. And again expand,

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 44

in another...another great breath and evolution.

RAM DASS: Yeah. And it does it on and on and on.

ELLSBERG: So that's a reassuring thought certainly that the...that the species can't die, and that life can't die anymore than a family dies, sort of you could say. But let me put that aside for a moment and look at another specialization here. We've been talking and I've been talking not about death and suffering, but about murder and torture. Now that is...an aspect of human relationships, and for the concepts to be meaningful at all, and let me put it for a moment on the...on the abstract plane here, or a somewhat metaphysical plane, the... Such concepts are meaningful only in the presence of a concept of separateness....

RAM DASS: Yes.

ELLSBERG: Of others. It's a relationship between beings that may be like...like, in fact what makes it a moral issue is that they are alike. And that they have...they both share a kind of freedom, and a contingency, and that their actions have contingency.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 45

But...but they are separate. They are separate. Suffering can be conceptualized²⁵, something that is experienced by the one. I just thought of this the other day as I was reading over, you know, your talk, your part of the manuscript. And... you mentioned for instance, that at this higher plane of awareness when one sees not only that we are related, we're related, we're family, we're brothers and sisters, the networking consciousness, but that at another level, we are one. One then understands that as you put it, if you suffer, I suffer. That is, the one....to say, you and I, is itself an illusion. The suffering may or may not also be an illusion. But in any case, the one... the one is suffering.

RAM DASS: The one includes all possible offshoots. The one includes all possible....

ELLSBERG: Yeah. Now when we...it's not merely syntactical difference here, when we say that one however, is causing the other to suffer, you are talking about one and the other, is essential to that...that is relation.

RAM DASS: That's all relational to that reality. Yes. It's all relational.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 46

ELLSBERG: And...I'll...put it this way, I wonder if focussing on the truth of oneness and unity, and I can understand that as truth, an aspect of truth and as a truth, does not potentially blind us to another reality, another truth. The truths that on the human level that go with human-caused suffering, a reality of oppression and exploitation and heirarchy and torture, which can only be grasped in the context of a reality of separateness... Now, one can say, there is no reality to separateness. But I'm saying, maybe that's wrong.

RAM DASS: If you deny any reality to embrace another reality, you're trapped. Just as if you embrace only the relative reality, you are trapped, and it is that thing we are talking about, about stretching to be able to simultaneously have a variety of sets of realities, consciously at the same moment, out of that comes wise action. OK, that includes the perfection as well as at all steps.

ELLSBERG: All right. Let me move. There are several themes I think that are going to come up. I said, we didn't have an agenda, but I knew that

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 47

there were some terms that I wanted us both to grapple with. And you have...

RAM DASS: Go right ahead. You're my teacher.

ELLSBERG: But some words though that I want to...
I want us to deal with, our...in our separate
ways, our one way, ^{are} our evil, guilt, and...words
like torture and murder and so forth. Let me...
another one is perfection. Now that's your word.
In a way...

RAM DASS: Mmm-hmm.

ELLSBERG: There are aspects of reality to which
I have not...for all the reading I have done on
mysticism and certainly experiences that I've
had, which I'm not prepared to talk about, where
I've not been able...I have nevertheless not been
able to use the word perfection and believe it and
mean it. And I could specialize that, very much,
but let me make it a little more general. I don't
see the human fear. I don't see the level...the
reality of society as perfect, and I cannot bring
myself through meditation or whatever to see it

as perfect. To allow that word to occur with it. But let me contrast that with something else. I see differently a world that encloses human reality, and that is the world of nature. Without going into the cosmos, I can...I can see a meaning in using the word perfection. As a...as a wholeness, an organic rightness, and orderliness somehow, and acceptability in some sense. And as a...something that is not for humans to improve on somehow. The larger that I look at the sphere of nature as a whole, or even more or less in the small, that includes death in the animal world. So it doesn't offend me to see a world in which death occurs, as perfect, never the less. I mean either logically or emotionally. And when we are focussing just on death, or even in the normal course of live, the sicknesses, the age, the infirmities, that lead toward death, that precede death, or that can come to the _____. But let's just say especially of the aged people. I would never use the word evil in connection with that. Some people would. The word, if you look in the dictionary, one of the meanings of evil would be anything painful, suffering, it could include just a bath, something that hurts. I do not propose to use the word, let's say, in that general sense. So in

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 49

that sense it doesn't seem to me that someone, the fact of someone dying is evil, as I use the word. Or think of it, react to it. Nor do I even think of it as necessarily bad. Or...let alone that death occurs. And certain kinds of sicknesses and wounds and suffering of...falling off a tree and breaking your leg and so forth. I do not aspire to a world where such suffering does not occur. Not only does it not seem possible, but it doesn't seem exactly necessary to change it in that... in that way. In the world of human society we see a great deal of torture that's going up in the world, a lot. And we're talking now about killing. Whereas death is inevitable and universal for everybody, and may in some sense be necessary, killing, and especially mass murder, does not seem, it's not inevitable. It's not everyone's lot. It's not every generation's lot. It's not every nation's lot. It doesn't seem necessary. It has various kinds of effects. But...it does not seem to me perfect. And I'm not willing. I would have to be, it would have to be explained to me and a lot would have to happen in my head for me to see it as perfect. I'll relate this to what you just said on the Bahagavad-Gita. Krishna is not just the voice, is speaking not just with the voice of

society. Krishna in that book, in that legend, in that tale, is telling the people who hear the tale, "accept Indian society as you find it. Accept the caste system, accept the fate of the Kashatria, the role of the Kashatria, accept the role of the untouchable, as you accept mountains and rivers, as part of a geography that is not for you to change, and which has its perfect...which is perfect just as the stars are perfect." And I do not accept that teaching. As you know.

RAM DASS: Oh, what a surprise.

ELLSBERG: But, moreover, I'm not sure that I want even to accept it provisionally, so as to learn a kind of...a certain mood from which I will later act, perhaps more efficiently, as an experience. I don't...I'm not sure...but I accept of course this possibility. It might be worth believing anything for an hour, for a day, for a year or something, because of the way you will be, feel and act, after you have believed that for a while. I can accept that pragmatically. But I...I'm open to that let's say. But at this moment, I'm very doubtful about it. That teaching came as you know, to Oppenheimer's mind precisely, to justify

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 51

what he had just witnessed, the explosion, the brilliance that he had brought about. That is when that line came into his mind. An explosion over the "hornado del muerto", the previous, the name, the place of death, which was the Indian name, the Mexican name for the area that he had chosen. But renamed, Trinity, the trinity site, near Alamagordo. To cause this manmade sun, the sun brought to earth. The brilliance of that sun then brought to his mind the notion of the Bhagavad-Gita, and it was all right what he had done because he had performed his role as a loyal citizen in the world, just as Arjuna had been told to perform his role to kill his relatives. And I would like to learn, not to behave as...as an Oppenheimer behaved in that way. And to learn that what he was hearing was, in a Christian context, the voice of Satan. The voice that said, accept power, do the work of power. Worship this brilliance. Worship the work that your hands have wrought because it is your role to have brought this to the world. And...accept society as Hindu's have accepted all this time, as it...as it exists. As perfect in the way that leaves are perfect, and burning stars are perfect, and fire is perfect, though if you put your hand in that fire, you will lose it.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 52

Nevertheless, it's perfect. It came to us that way. It's not your job, And nobody needs to change fire. And this fire which was brought to us, not by nature, acting unaided by humans, and not by humans acting outside of a hierarchy, but by humans doing the work of war at the request of a President, with taxpayers funds used in secret, that's just as perfect as the...as the flowers, and everything else. Just as perfect as the cancer cells, if you'd like. I'm saying then that I think that to focus only on what the forms of suffering that the Buddha saw, when he arose as a prince and went out and saw suffering in the world, is inadequate. Buddha saw what his father had not wanted him to see. He saw a sick man, an old man, and a dead man, and he concluded, life is suffering.

RAM DASS: And he saw a monk.

ELLSBERG: Was that part of the suffering though?
I don't recall that.

RAM DASS: No. Passing things that affected him.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 53

ELLSBERG: Well he saw that as...as a possible way out. Yeah, that affected him. But in the legend or the reality, the history, he did not see a poor man, he did not see a man being enslaved or whipped. He did not see the suffering of human society as suffering that was somehow to be transcended let alone changed. That, I'm just...maybe I'm wrong in focussing on this, but I have the impression that there is some significance in the fact that the reality of suffering that he looked at, and which he sought to transcend by meditation and enlightenment was not a reality of an unjust society in itself. He did see injustice as we know. He did transcend the caste system, but by withdrawing from it essentially. By his followers ignoring caste, by taking in disciples from every caste and so forth, and by meditating. But not by challenging it in the larger society as...as Gandhi did do. So let me...I didn't expect to get so empasioned but that's fine.

RAM DASS: That's great. You've come alive when you did that.

ELLSBERG: Well...(laughter), this thought...

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 54

RAM DASS: I can react to what you've said, without a question.

ELLSBERG: Of course...on a question...I know I'm laying out several themes here and I'm expecting you to react to whatever you want. But when... when Gandhi is...first the question. We met two years ago, I don't really know the answer to this. When did you begin to study Gandhi? Had you been doing it for some time before that?

RAM DASS: Yes. Oh yeah.

ELLSBERG: Has that been a long study?

RAM DASS: Yeah, because in 1967 when I met my guru in India, the second day I was brought to him, when I came to him, he walked...he looked at me and he said, in Hindi, he said, "you know Gandhi?" I said, no, I don't know him. I know of him. He said, "You like him?" I said, he was a great saint. He said, "You be like Gandhi." I said, I'd sure like to be. And then he threw me out. That started the whole process. And I lived in Kosani where Gandhi worked on the Gita. I lived at the same house he was in when he was in sort of house arrest and at different

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 55

places like that. So I do yes, have a great....

ELLSBERG: OK, here's the comment I want to make then. First, Gandhi, I've looked through a good deal of Gandhi's commentary on the Gita. And he admits it is very idiosyncratic, it certainly is.

RAM DASS: The Gita. Yeah.

ELLSBERG: He wanted to love it. He did love it. And he loved it as an Indian and a Hindu, and...

RAM DASS: He did love it yes.

ELLSBERG: He came to it rather as you know, late in life, actually through an English translation. He didn't learn it in India. And his favorite poetry. He wanted to love it. And he had to reinterpret it so that he could love it. And he interpreted it in part as a conflict that is taking place within the mind of Arjuna. The war...in question...

RAM DASS: Well, it is also that, obviously....

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 56

ELLSBERG: It's not a purely personal interpretation.

RAM DASS: No.

ELLSBERG: But it's one that made no....

RAM DASS: His Christian laying on is the heavy thing that he does to it.

ELLSBERG: Well that too. That too. But I would also say that he permitted himself to ignore the very unfavorable interpretation that I just thought of. Unfavorable from my point of view. I hear Krishna, by the way, and for those of you who don't...how many do not know this story of the Bahagavad-Gita, which I'm not going to give, but actually....Let me just say though, that this passage which I think you will have helped to explain in one moment here, it's so relevant to the general subject of...correct me if I remember it wrong. Arjuna, the Prince Kashatria, which is to say a warrior caste, finds himself called on to give the signal for two opposing armies, of the two great families, two great clans, to fight each other, and they are ranked on either side of a valley.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 57

WOMAN'S VOICE: They are all in the same family.

ELLSBERG: In the same family. Right. But it's
two branches...

RAM DASS: I don't think you should do this Daniel...

ELLSBERG: OK, OK, don't do it.

RAM DASS: Because you and I have to have a dialogue,
and you're not going to teach them the Gita. I'm
not going to accept this interpretation, so why
don't you forget that.

ELLSBERG: No, just what I'm going to say to you.

RAM DASS: Well, you can talk to me. I know the
Gita. So talk to me as if I know the Gita.

ELLSBERG: But I don't think we can. I think we...

RAM DASS: Well, let's do it so we get on with it.

ELLSBERG: OK. Then, I'm saying is what Krishna's
saying is the voice of the bureaucrat. Is the
bureaucrat's credo that he's given....

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 58

RAM DASS: If you want to quote it to me, go ahead
and I'll hear it, you know.

ELLSBERG: No. I'm not quoting it at all. I'm just
saying I think it's a crock of shit.

RAM DASS: I understand what you are saying, yes.

ELLSBERG: I think it's not only a crock of shit,
but it is evil, evil advice. Evil advice. What
Krishna was doing at that moment is done by men
all the time. Men. And when they do it they
are not evil, because I'm going to come back to
that. I'm not going to call that evil and I'm
not going to use that category. But I'm saying what
they are doing is evil. Because what they are
doing is supplying a rationale and a legitimation
for other humans to kill their relatives. In the
case, what does need to be said as a footnote is,
that what Krishna has recognized is that he has
relatives on both sides of the line. And to give
the call, is that relatives must kill relatives.
And he by giving the call is killing relatives,
because he's doing it. And Krishna says, don't
worry about it. On the one hand, I'm quoting
him now, for you to respond, you don't kill. Humans

don't kill each other. We are all one. Killing doesn't happen. It's a nonreality. By me are all these killed. If there is such a thing as killed. I am time. I am the destroyer. I am the scatterer of the people. By me it all happens. You don't do it all at all. Don't worry about having any responsibility, any guilt, any obligation to it one way or the other. That is grandiose. That is grandiose on your part. You can't be guilty because you can't do anything. By me it is done. I am the one. I am the force and the energy. So on the one hand you don't need to pretend and flatter yourself that you have...can be guilty of everything. ¶ A very fast footnote. ¶ I was just reflecting on the fact that came up in a lecture, I was rereading the lecture which I referred to before, where I mentioned what a poor impression I made, in 1970, when I said at a conference, and it was quoted thereafter, that I was the only person at that table who was subject to being tried in a war crimes trial. And that was heard in two ways. A, that I was comparing myself to Spear, which is grandiose, which I made clear actually at the time not to do. I said, I'm not Spear, I'm not MacNamara. But in my own way, I was involved. So I'm...I'm a possible. I'm susceptible to being tried for war

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 60

crimes. So on the one hand...they nevertheless didn't hear the qualifications. It was heard as grandiose. And second, it gives a very poor impression to suggest that one is guilty, that one acts out of guilt. But let me take the grandiosity. It struck me as I was rereading it this afternoon in a plane, that passage, when I refer to it, that... what Americans living in a bureaucratic society are trained to hear is, you are guilty for you. You are not president. You're not president. You don't have any power. You don't have any responsibility. You are a zero. If a zero is omnipotent, congratulations, you are there. Everyone of these citizens is then omnipotent, because that's what they are, cipher zero. For them to talk about guilt is to suggest that they have responsibility. To suggest that they have responsibility is to suggest they have power. They don't have power? First, they are nothing. They don't know anything. They don't have the information. They are not in the apparatus. They have power only when they serve as an electron in the current that flows from the power house in the White House. When they pass on the transmission of orders then they are participating in power. Well, that's what Krishna is telling to Arjuna. Do your job. Do your duty in the order of the universe,

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS

1 MAY 1984

SIDE 2, PAGE 61

and then you're powerful, then you count. Otherwise you don't count. The other side he says, is that death is unreality. That's part of your metaphysics as I understand it. That, it not only comforts the person in the presence of death, her own or someone elses, it also comforts the person about to kill. And the phenomena I want to look at is not only how we relate as I said, to dying, but to killing, and to torture. And the...the question of suffering? Well, on the...^{Blagavac - Hita} I say, I hear it as the bureaucrats credo. It seems to me absolutely natural that Oppenheimer then thought of that in the moment that he was involved in passing on this something that from a non-mystic point of view and a non-Hindu point of view might be involved in ending it. In a kind of end that is not part of the Hindu's reality. But, maybe the Hindu is wrong, and maybe it is a part of reality. In which case, maybe Oppenheimer had some choice and some freedom, and maybe he could have resisted as Arjuna could have said, fuck off. They are my relatives and I'm not going to do it. You do it, and I'll fight you if you do it. Fight me? I am Krishna. Look at me, mighty reality. He then shows himself, and he shows himself in one of his guises as a mountain of skulls if I remember, am I right? As in Tamerlane and the others. True.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 62

That's part of the reality isn't it? Then, it must be part of perfection, is it not?

RAM DASS: Yep.

ELLSBERG: Bullshit, I would say. That is not part of perfection. That's right. I do not accept the word perfection in that...for that mountain of skulls. Yes. Yes, we all are skulls. We'll all rest or burn somewhere, either in the earth or burn in fire or dwell in the ocean sometime. But we will not necessarily be part of the kind of pile of skulls that the Vietnamese show visitors to Cambodia these days, that Pol Pot created. We do not have to work for Pol Pot. We do not have to accept that our President this day backs Pol Pot in the U.N. as the representative of Cambodia. All those are realities that could be changed. That I insist could be changed and I believe should be changed and should be resistant^{ed.}~~ant~~. Now what it's getting to is this. Gandhi did not want to repudiate the Bhagavad-Gita so he interpreted it his way. Let me interpret it my way, and say, I do repudiate that as wisdom relating to the social world, and I believe that Gandhi did in his practice and now what I want to say to you and I will...I want to

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 63

be heard, so I will be less passionate. And I will breathe deeply for a moment. I think you and I have both studied Gandhi and we have drawn different things from his complex personal awareness and life. He was remarkable in at least three ways: one, his metaphysic, which was actually not remarkable, it was pretty straight Hindu in its quarter, _____, more like Buddhist. Second, his positive program, his simplicity, the life of simplicity. On that point I have not followed it at all, just at all. Lately _____ I feel some pull toward it. I would say it's increasing, an increasing challenge as I see the connectedness of the problem of war and nuclear war, to the problem of injustice and waste in the world. But I didn't just learn that yesterday. I've seen that for a few years now. And thus I feel an increasing pressure from that and challenge toward it, but haven't yet responded, anymore than I did ten years ago when I, I wasn't even yet aware of that problem at all. Poverty and justice, that's another problem. I'm worried about nuclear war. I now see the connection. And given that connection I do see the challenge not to be part of a system of waste that does underlie war. But the third part, the need and obligation rather urgently to resist

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 64

social evils. I'm almost done now. I'm going to put to you very soberly, not just in terms of what you have chosen to do in your life, but in your understanding as I've heard you and Rick, I'm not sure that you accept in your mind or your heart and relate to Gandhi's invention of non-violent resistance. And I'm going to put to you, I ask myself why you have not brought yourself to do this little act in a way of civil disobedience over two years, when I know that it has been problematic for you. When I know that you have thought about it and felt challenged by it and would in some ways like to do it, and talked about the possibility of doing it, and it's going on, I ask myself why you haven't. And I can...it's a time of course, when many, many thousands of people are doing it. It isn't...in a way it's easy to do for various people, relative to other periods of time, it's there and it's happening. Let me conjecture, and then you respond. That I conjecture, it can't be that you are afraid of going to jail. First of all as you know, that's so trivial in these acts, you know, it's a night in jail. You may not even go to jail. I mean lots of times, you know that. But even if it was prison, I don't even believe that's a factor. I

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 65

don't believe that. Lose legitimacy as somebody tells you. Lose status. You and I are freer than most, at that point we have less to lose in certain aspects, which is perfectly obvious. It's less consequential for us than for lots of other people, most other people to do it. Neither of us can look more peculiar than we already look.

P I conjecture that you're not convinced it's right. Not only for you to do it, but for other people to do it. That it has a confrontational aspect to it, which to you expresses a belief in a reality of separateness, a reality of conflict, which you don't want to validate in your deepest sense at this moment. And you may be right. I believe each of us, by the way, in all of these matters, I honestly believe, each of us has at this moment, something to learn from the other. I mean a lot to learn. In other words, I don't feel that I have a message to give you, that you must take. On the contrary, I'll come to it later, not now, but... I want to say what I feel I have learned from you, how it has changed my perspective. But...and maybe you will or will not change. But here's where I think you and I differ on this point. I think... I don't think you really agree...accept Gandhi's message in the importance and usefulness of manifesting

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 66

conflict, struggle, in this form. Of...the question of where you sit when you meditate. Of putting your body in between this and that. And as I say it I realize there is a separateness to that. When you sit in general you are simply filling a space in the universe, you are part of the energy, you are connecting this to that and everything. When you sit as Allen did, eventually, having rebelled against his teacher, Shurdiumtrupa, to do it. When he sat on the tracks, he was sitting between the train and the factory. And he was saying, "not through me." "You don't...you don't do this." He was separated. He said, "I don't want this to happen." He was acting in Gandhian fashion then. I want to say simply that when you were, when you were meditating in the crowd at Rocky Flats and elsewhere, as I understand it, you were in harmony with part of Gandhi's perception, the metaphysical belief in unity and compassion and harmony. But I don't think you yet...I don't think you've yet ex...become, I mean neither of us is a full Gandhian as I've just said, whether that's good or bad, but neither of us accept everything in Gandhi. I have not accepted the chastity. I've not accepted the voluntary poverty, lots of other things. I don't think you have accepted the civil disobedience

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 2, PAGE 67

as something you want to do because I think you think it offends your deepest conceptions of reality and compassion and harmonizing. Even though Gandhi did it. It was right for Gandhi somehow, but I don't think you've faced the fact, the idea that it was right for Gandhi. Because that's where it should be challenging to you. If it was right for Gandhi, it should be ²¹¹right for you. This year.

RAM DASS: Watch that logic. It may not be logic. But go ahead, if you want to make it, go ahead.

ELLSBERG: No, no. I'm not making a generalization. I'm saying it's not a logic. It's an empirical perhaps wrong perception about you. I'm not saying it should be right for you and you and you. I don't mean that.

BEGIN SIDE 3:

ELLSBERG: I've 60 seconds to say, I could have been misunderstood in what I....

ELLSBERG: I don't say to anyone...I don't say to you, and you've heard me say this before and I want to reiterate. I don't in fact tell anyone, do

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 68

this action, do that action, or you shouldn't do actions, or whatever. There are lots of things to do other than civil disobedience. Ram Dass is doing a lot of them. _____

he is doing an enormous job of education among other things. He is doing a lot. And I did not...I do not...I'm saying to you now, of course, I hope you understand, I do not say then, you should do this, you should do that. I actually expressed myself poorly. What I meant to say was, that it shouldn't...that if it were right for Gandhi to do this, than, if I know you, and correct me if I don't know you in this respect, if I know you and in harmony with your thinking, it should feel all right to do it. It should somehow feel all right. Not that you must do a given action or to... or right for you to do a particular action. But it should somehow be accessible. And what I'm saying to you that my sense is, that for reasons that would be worth exploring even now, that my conjecture is, that it is not accessible to you, that you're... it's not available to you as a way of acting now because I think you feel that it would contradict some of your deepest commitments to a sense of harmonizing, unity, compassion, and so forth. It would be too conflictual. That's...that's my

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 69

perception which I would like to hear your reaction to...

RAM DASS: To join the issue directly, the question is, does evil exist and is it perfect or not. And the answer is yes to both parts. Evil does exist and it is perfect. Now, the course of the word perfect then needs to be interpreted obviously. Because I'm talking at two different planes of reality when I say that. It's the same thing as saying, there is suffering and it is all perfect. Or, everything is a lie, and that's the truth. That's a logical one. But there is, dealing with two things which are inconsistent, if you in a logical sense on one plane, but they are true across planes. Now, if you look for example, and I...I'm going to deal with violence, and that, but if you look at the animal kingdom, or the...mouse that is killed by the cat. To say to the mouse, well, it's perfect, is somewhat of a...of academic interest from the mouse's point of view. And yet if you stand back and understand the laws of instinct theory and the way in which food is perceived by one animal and what it sees and what it reacts to, you would say, it is all lawful. I understand the laws of instinct behavior and the

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 70

laws of the way it all works, and within that domain, it is perfect, meaning it is lawful. OK? Now, there's something that happens to you, Dan, when you get to the human realm. It's as if you leave law behind. As if you somehow assume that the human being is outside of the realm of the laws of form. And having been trained in psychology and social sciences I was trained to study the laws of this domain.

ELLSBERG: You weren't a rat psychologist were you?

RAM DASS: No, I was a human psychologist.

ELLSBERG: I mean you weren't one of those...you weren't one, the ones who took his cue from the rats, were you by any chance?

RAM DASS: No, I was not a...I was not a Skinnerian behaviorist. I was a neo-behaviorist, which was a...the schlockist way I could get into the scientific realm, bring in Rogers and Maslow, and you all know the people I mean. Sloppy thinkers. OK, so what I studied was the law of human behavior. And I saw that there were achievement motives and my

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 71

specialty was motivation. So I saw that with achievement motivation, affiliation motivation, dependency, nurturance, succorance, etc., etc. And that people acted under these motives in certain ways. And I saw that there was frustration and it led to aggression. And I saw that which way the aggression was directed, which way it was displaced, and I was involved in...in studying empirically, empirically demonstrating Freud's laws of identification. That was one of the earlier books I published. Identification in Child Rearing. So I have been interested in the laws of human behavior. And there is nothing that I can hear or see thus far, in the laws of human behavior...in the behavior of humans that...that brings into question whether or not it is lawful. Whether it's right is a whole other issue. That's within it, the law. But from outside looking at the lawfulness of it, there is no question in my mind that human beings respond within certain laws of behavior. And the fact that they have prefrontal cortexes and therefore, can do it on a fancier level and can talk fancy things, doesn't make it any less lawful. So as far as I am concerned the human being is merely another species that has its own laws and those laws include violence, destruc-

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 72

tion, perhaps destroying themselves, evil, all of it, is within the law, from that level. Only... just keep...try to keep the levels clear, because we really are having a dialogue across levels of reality. And that's important for this issue, because that's where it gets confusing. And that's where it gets confusing about the Gita and all the rest of it, is across levels. And unless you can simultaneously be conscious at both...on two levels, which is what I think a mench is, is somebody who can stay with the human condition and also stay with the awareness of the perfection of the law including your own behavior. The fact that I just did this with my hand is not a random movement, a chance movement. It comes out of a whole set of things that my father was a district attorney and all of these things.

ELLSBERG: He didn't set down the law for you to do that?

RAM DASS: No, he didn't set down the law.

ELLSBERG: Do you have another brother? Does he do the same?

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 73

RAM DASS: I don't know. Probably not.

ELLSBERG: Do you have the same father?

RAM DASS: Yeah. Now wait a minute. You've
got to relax for a second.

WOMAN'S VOICE: _____.

RAM DASS: We could do that. Do you want to do
that? Just to...because otherwise you are not
going to give me a chance to build this....

ELLSBERG: If you'd rather. I was going to
ask you which you would prefer. We both gave a
rather long speech, and I was going to say, should
we do more back and forth now, or would you prefer
to go on?

RAM DASS: What do you all suggest?

ELLSBERG: No...nevermind.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I want you to respond to that.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 74

ELLSBERG: Wait. I don't think that's an issue. It's for us to decide. It's...if you prefer to be given your space and not to be interrupted that's all right. Is that what you prefer?

RAM DASS: I'll take some space. But I'd like to clear the air so we can get on, and then you just pick up the points. And perhaps after this one we can get into more of a...but...

RAM DASS: And in...but in answer to the parody you were just making since that was there, I would say that the....would you close that window...? That one's OK. It's just that that's right in my line of sight there. That...there...that a parent does what he does, as Stanley Milgram pointed out, there are laws in authority and the way authority works too, and _____ who doesn't, and that's all lawful too. Now so... in the sense of law, that...at that level, first of all, we could consider the word perfect. We... then now, because I have another realm I've worked with also, which is the realm of beyond form, because to me truth has no form to it. Everything in truth is relatively true. It's not absolutely true, because it's also not true on other levels. It's

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 75

not true across levels, just at this one. It is perfect but it is not perfect. So you could only say that is relatively true within that plane. Now if I can, now when I talk to you about death and suffering, I say, I am faced with a paradox that I will work to end suffering. And at the same moment there is a part of me that understands the laws of the universe and sees the way in which suffering is doing something to people that from my understanding of what incarnation is about, what a human being takes birth for, is a very valuable thing. And yet I wouldn't do it to them, and I would do my best to take it away, as a human being on this plane, and at the same place on another plane I appreciate the perfection of the suffering and the perfection of my desire to end the suffering, OK? So it...it gets a little complicated because you've got to...you've got to be open to all of that all at once. Now let's play with the, just the Gita and the castes and all that for the moment, Krishna....In the...in the Hindu tradition, the caste system was originally laid down in Vedic law by realized beings, by Rishis, who were considered realized beings. They were beings who saw the way things were, let's just, for the

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 76

moment, I'm just giving you the Hindu situation. And what they saw was that people, this was within a reincarnational format. They understood that people took births again and again. This was the way reality was. And they saw that they took reincarnation to do certain work of a birth. And they saw that there were different ways in which you could work on earth to do that particular work you had to do. And you had different work to do than I did and she did and so on. Each person had the unique work to do. And the original way in which the caste system worked, in the Sat Yuga, which was the time when truth abounded, when people were really right there for each other, when there was trust, when there was not greed and there was not avarice, and it was, there was a different quality of human being than we know on earth at this moment, when that time existed and everybody was in a reincarnational reality, and that reality was the dominant reality in which they lived, they understood that OK, we're on earth. Well, you know what you are this time, you're a father and a person that is interested in economic and political analysis, and a person that is interested in social concerns and that's part of your incarnation. And I have this part in which I happen to be a

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 77

musician and an artist and that's my part. And in a way it was not for them to say, you must be it. It was for them to create a grid in which people could find a slot and be comfortable in their incarnation, without spending their incarnation in the confusion of trying to figure out what they were supposed to be. And it was set up to be... and you can say...now wait a minute. You hear that. You hear human bureaucratic authority, because you see the Rishis...that's why I said to you, the Rishis were realized beings. And they were speaking this from a higher appreciation of truth. And that's... Wait a minute...wait a minute.

ELLSBERG: Were they not Aryan invaders? Weren't they Aryan invaders?

RAM DASS: Who the Rishis?

ELLSBERG: ^{don't} I know about the Rishis, but aren't you... when you talk about the Vedas, aren't you talking about...I know very little about this, so maybe I'm totally wrong here, but aren't you talking about an ideology that came in with the Aryan invaders that basically took over Travidian Culture and subordinated it to lower caste system. And

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 78

they instituted a caste that would rationalize
and perpetuate the division between the indigenous
people....

RAM DASS: The caste system...

ELLSBERG: Military invaders.

RAM DASS: The caste system existed prior to that
for the Aryans.

ELLSBERG: Among the Dravidians.

RAM DASS: No, for the Aryans.

RAM DASS ELLSBERG: Wait a minute. You are doing a...I under-
stand where you want to go with that, but give me
a chance. Just slow down a little bit. Because
within the Aryans, they used it, when they had
applied it to the Dravidians, it was already the
beginning of something else. All right? So you're
right, but you're wrong, OK? Because you're not
hearing what I'm saying. That in a purist traditional
sense the motivation and where it came from had a
completely different rationale and understanding
among the people than how it then became used by

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 79

people as they brought it into the human realm and became less conscious. In the same way Christianity turned out to be very different than what Christ represented. OK, it's the same thing of the kind of contamination that happens over time with institutions and so on. So it was designed as in a way, a very...a very moral thing. Not a thing to punish people. Not a thing to say you're a sweeper. That's hell. Because it was understood that a sweeper would have pride and respect and the king would bow down to the sweeper, and offer flowers to the sweeper, who could be a high saint as a sweeper, and the king could be lesser being, and they both recognized that. That was at a time when they recognized consciousness. They just didn't recognize social-political role, and worldly power. Because that was...the king was as much under the responsibility to live dharmically, that is to do his gig perfectly as the sweeper was, and the perfection of the way they did their gig was what determined the reward from their point of view, not the question of which one... whether...because higher and lower wasn't the dimension they were living in. So I just want you to understand because if you are going to

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 80

use the caste system to hit with you've got to understand the source of that caste system and what it originally was, and then see what it decays to. So that when Krishna is talking about...to a Shatri in the caste system, he is talking in the...tretuga, the second uga...

ELLSBERG: But should we be discussing the interpretation of the Bahagavad-Gita?

RAM DASS: You started it. And I have to do it because you are bringing, you are doing to Krishna... what you are doing is, reducing Krishna to a voice of a bureaucrat telling someone else to... you are refusing to accept the fact that there are other planes of reality, from which, and when you say that book is a book of trash, you've got to realize that this is the karma you get from that, that you've got to allow me to deal with the fact that I think it's not a book of trash.

ELLSBERG: But wait, but understanding first that I don't understand it at all remotely in the complex way or the historical way that you do. Just...might it, I can suggest the possibility of dealing with my perception of it as a message

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 81

to us today.

RAM DASS: Your message...

ELLSBERG: No, as the ~~B~~ahagavad-Gita's message
to Oppenheimer.

RAM DASS: To who? To Oppenheimer. Well, that's
to Oppenheimer, and yours is to you, it's not to
me. The same stimulus is going to be responded
to differently by each person. Do you think
the ~~B~~ahagavad-Gita should not have been written
because Oppenheimer used it to justify an act
which is considered evil?

ELLSBERG: I want to suggest...can, well, I ask
you to ask yourself, if you think this is...

RAM DASS: You've given me a lot of questions.
I'd like the time to....

ELLSBERG: But not on...OK, I'll concede anything
on the ~~B~~ahagavad-Gita in the world. Anything.

RAM DASS: It's not trash. That Krishna was
speaking from a higher wisdom. That that was
perfect. Are you ready to concede all that or

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 82

do we go on?

ELLSBERG: That what was perfect?

RAM DASS: What Krishna said to Arjuna was the
right thing to say?

ELLSBERG: Well, no.

RAM DASS: OK, then don't give me that bullshit.
You're not ready to do that at all.

ELLSBERG: But you hope to persuade me of that?

RAM DASS: No, I merely feel that if we are having
a dialogue and that's going to appear in print,
I'm not leaving that issue unstated. What the
hell that would be needed.

ELLSBERG: OK, go ahead. If you want. It's
your turn.

RAM DASS: It's interesting because that will
be sufficient to say about the Gita.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 83

ELLSBERG: Mmmmm!!!!

05 RAM DASS: It was perfect. It was perfect.

[LAUGHTER]

RAM DASS: It was, exactly. That brought out just what had to be said. Now, OK, now we've finished with castes. Now we talk about Gandhi for a moment and whether I should do civil disobedience about nuclear energy in 1984 at Livermore, because Gandhi did civil disobedience to get rid of the British in India in the 1940's...30's.

ELLSBERG: Can I just...the question I raised, which I said, I may not yet have made it clear....

RAM DASS: Is whether or not I've embraced his civil disobedience.

ELLSBERG: The question is...it's really a question and I may not have made it as such. I would like to put it as a question. I would like to hear your own thoughts, your own thoughts, not as to why people tell you to do it, me or anyone else, or not

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 84

to do it. But your own thoughts as to why you choose not to....It doesn't feel right, but why you think it doesn't feel right.

RAM DASS: I appreciate that question.

ELLSBERG: I'm not going to grade you on your answer.

[LAUGHTER]

RAM DASS: You know me too.

RAM DASS: I am not yet convinced...I have not yet heard to my own satisfaction in my heart of hearts what is the optimum action to do to change the course of events. I think the course of events is...is urgent, it is ugly, it is catastrophic, it is all the things you say it is. And I have not yet in my heart heard what the action is which would change it. I have, as you know, no fear of going to prison. That's not an issue. I don't feel that it would cut down my options to get arrested. And I...as I said to a group last night there's a part of me that feels that if my getting arrested would lead other people to at least examine themselves about this issue, it would be useful, and

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 85

that's what Dan is doing and that's what...wooded me in that direction. But I also feel that it has to come out of a place in me in which I feel that that act is harmonious with everything else I understand about the human condition. And I'm having a hard time because of how symptomatic the bomb is of a condition, of...dis-ease among human beings at this point, and it can be disease or dis-ease, either way you wanted. Disease of cynacism, disease of greed and lust and fear and hatred and ill-will and it's a very pervasive quality of life at this moment. And whether or not you act within that, whether...whether my act at that point would be reactive to that or would be really responsive to the deeper rooted thing, that's where I'm struggling at the moment OK? And I...I said last night, I had a meeting, I was at a dinner party with a group of people who are meditators and who are spiritual type folk, and they are lawyers and they are civil action people and they are working on mental...getting people out of mental hospitals and they are...one's a writer for the New York Times, I mean they are very confident people. And I looked at one and I said, now you're building a photography studio.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 86

What would I have to tell you about the nuclear issue, I said, if you knew that I was in danger, that I was going to do something, that something was going to happen to me, and you loved me, would you give up building your photography studio and help me out? And he said, yeah. And I said, well how? The fact that you are going to lose every loved one including me, by an act that may happen, and you're a participant in it and you are going ahead and building your photography studio, now that doesn't make sense to me. And he said, it's so abstract I can't get hold of it. He said, if we marched on Central America, I would be down in Washington. He was a lawyer. I would be down in Washington tomorrow. The hell with the photographic studio. I'd be down in Washington tomorrow protesting that. He said, because that's a human condition I can get hold of. I cannot get hold of this in a way that's going to...that mobilizes my action. I'm ...I'm just dealing with the...

ELLSBERG: You are talking about the nuclear issue?

RAM DASS: Yeah. Now, what I was doing was raising that issue to that group, not...his answer is not

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 87

that critical. But I was raising it to that group because you have compelled me by the nature of your commitment, to raise that issue to that group, and they didn't really want to deal with that issue particularly. They would rather have talked about meditation gossip, and the dinner, and the flowers that bloom in the spring, and all those things, but they were dealing with it, and as they got finished, we all felt we had been somewhat shaken by the moment. And it was shaken out of my...deep trying to come to terms with this, which comes out of your deep coming to terms with it, which is the way the process works, OK? So in answering your question of why I haven't done it, I'm doing it, I feel. OK? I mean that's the answer, that it is going on. That it is a very ongoing process. And I wouldn't have had that discussion last night, and kept pushing everybody about it. And...dealing with each of their answers one by one. You know, because people are saying, it is dealing...we are dealing with our own resistance to even thinking about the issue. We are dealing to our own resistance about the reactions we have when the issue comes up. So I read your manuscript again. And in it you said, when you...you...what you did with history

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 88

was you undercut all of the myths in which my history is built. All right? All of the myths that I as a child, as I put in the manuscript, was in air raid ward spotter (?). And my brother was in the Air Force so he was part of the bombing people.

ELLSBERG: What did he do?

RAM DASS: He was a fighter pilot. He was...but he was an instructor most of the time. So, but still, our boys were fighting and we you know, we were all that, and then for me to have to face the bombing was a waste of time. It didn't do anything. It was the result of a completely misguided power play by...by...by a group of not only Americans but English and so on. And then all the issues about the fire bombs, and the loss of the 'just war' concept, and realizing that Kennedy and Truman and Eisenhower, and all these people were a party to decisions, that...I mean I saw what you were doing to me, and that what I was feeling was that you were not only forcing me to realize the...the unlikelihood that there was going to be a future, but you were just taking away my past as well. And what I saw you doing as

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 89

well. And what I saw you doing as a result of that....

ELLSBERG: How did you feel about that?

RAM DASS: It was wonderful. See I loved it, because the minute you can get out of time-binding, most people...most people respond to that by pushing it away, because they exist because of their time-binding, their historic historicity. My whole understanding of an awakened being is quite independent of time which is death. And therefore, the more you can cut into my attachments to history, the more I see you are my teacher. Not at just the level you think you are my teacher, but you are my teacher at the level that's helping me see through the game of story-line, of time binding, OK? So I was both terribly pained by it and terribly excited by it. Because I have those two motors. One is a human being to protect myself, and the other is a conscious being to ^{awaken?} await. OK? So, and by the way, just an aside about Gandhi. I don't consider Gandhi a saint, in the...in the sense of a fully realized being. I think Gandhi had a lot of places where he made compromises, not consciously, just unconscious

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 90

compromises. I don't think he really finally did it in that full sense of his being. Because he would have had a different quality of his being to him. I think he brought the two as close together as most people ever do, and he did a damn good job of it. But he was still caught in a lot of ways. And so I don't take him as a statement. I think he's got some wonderful quotable lines and he sure did a lot of beautiful stuff, and he's a teaching for me. He is not a teacher of the final statement.

RAM DASS: The issue of evil and violence and terrorism and killing another human being. There is a plain of reality on which there is good and evil. There is a plane of reality, just as which there is a plane of reality in which form exists which has positive and negative charges and dark and light. There is a plane in which there is good and evil. It's the plane of polarity. And on that plane we exist. We also exist independent of that, but we exist on that plane. And on the plane that...to the extent that we exist, everything you say is right. Evil must be resisted. It must be. And the idea is to align yourself with dharma, which is of

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 91

the way of things, of the harmony of things, of the truth of things. Not acquiescence. And when you look at my history, you will see that I was a upwardly mobile Jewish boy from Newton, who was willing to accept any...I would have shocked those...shocked those dogs into insensitivity...

ELLSBERG: People?

RAM DASS: I would have shocked people into insensitivity. And I've done immoral things like that as part of the way to climb the ladder of success. And you may or may not have realized you were doing that. But when you are sitting in the White House playing war plans, as a high...as a successful man, you have done the same thing, right? So we are both dealing with a lot of stuff, karma, that we have created in the past. When something happened to me, which in this case was drugs, which tooled me to a place in my own being in which I recognized as a deeper connection to the universe than to the one which my upwardly mobile achieving was connected with, I was perfectly willing to stand up and say no, without any problem. I mean I did, I stood up that day, Dave McClellan came up to me, and he said, look the meeting is coming

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 92

up. We're going to get rid of Tim Leary, but if you keep your mouth shut we'll save you. And the charges were made by Herb Kelman, by the way, against us.

ELLSBERG: The ethics guy.

RAM DASS: He came down on us, and said we were immoral and all this sort of thing. And when the thing was over, Tim was shocked because Herb was our friend, and this again was a public meeting. And I got up and I said, I would like to speak for us. And Dave looked at me and he said, like that. It's too bad. I can't save you. I made the choice. And the choice wasn't even difficult. I didn't even have to decide, should I or shouldn't I or will I or won't I. Should I resist, shouldn't I, should I do civil disobedience? It was obvious. Any fool would see, for me to go against that intuitive sense of truth, how could I live with that? How do you know to do anything if you don't trust that intuitive sense? I have to be released by that. Now you can call that Krishna. You can call it your intuitive heart. You can call it God. You can call it whatever you want. But it's a reality to me. And that determines my actions.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 93

My actions are not determined by our rational discussion. You can be right, right, right, right, and I still don't do it. And I can't even tell you why I don't do it. And I don't even feel I know what to do about that, other than to just say that I'll keep struggling, pouring it all in, this is another existential moment. Maybe in the struggle the bomb will go off and I will have said at the last moment, oh shit, I should have. But maybe not. I don't know. I don't know. OK? Now, I've got to also deal in this discussion... with...with the fact of...of death and life and skulls and piles of skulls and things like that.

RAM DASS: When you are existing only in a...in the reality of physical planes, senses and thinking mind, which sees objects and thinks this way on this plane, issues like reincarnation are speculative at best. They are theoretically interesting issues, OK? There is a way in which my consciousness dwells in the universe in such a way that that is not speculative. That is the way it is. And I as a scientist am appalled by my saying that, but that's the way it is. It's not...it's not a theory open to testing. It's

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 94

just the way it is, OK? And it is...and because of my living at that other reality at the same moment that I'm living in this one, death has an entirely different meaning to it. Not just the speculation about it. Not based on a belief that could be changed, not beliefs. It's a faith, in the sense that it's something I am one with. All right? So that it's implied...you've got to understand that we are speaking from very different places in terms of experiential validity. In terms of how we are looking at death. And when that fear of death is different for a human being they act differently. They act differently. They hear...they hear the word urgent differently. They hear the word, ooo, it may be all over, different. I mean when I...like when the Buddha said, now you can say, well, the Buddha is a nice bureaucrat and all that stuff, but when the Buddha said, put him with Krishna, when the Buddha said, do you know how many times you have done this? He said, imagine a mountain six miles long, six miles wide, six miles high, and every hundred years a bird flies over the mountain with a silk scarf in his beak and runs the scarf over the mountain once, every hundred years. And in the length of time it would take the silk scarf to wear away

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 95

the mountain, that's how long you've been reincarnated.

ELLSBERG: By the way, I just...I do...of course, I don't rank Buddha with Krishna on this. And he didn't say anything like the same. I think that has to be interpolated. He was saying, you've lived and reincarnated. He did not draw from that, therefore, kill. What he said was, don't kill.

RAM DASS: No, I understand that. I understand that. I was establishing another point first.

ELLSBERG: So I don't think...I find them very different.

RAM DASS: So at least if we could just establish that point, that from this other plane these things feel differently and you act differently. And the meaning of a human existence is precious and beautiful, but nothing to get too worked up about, or to cling to too heavily or to get too freaked about losing it. And each person has their own karma unfolding, and see, it gets very heavy. And I'm going to give you the heavy scenario which is really painful and it's embarrassing to even present it. But it's got to be said. From that

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 96

point of view the people in the Holocaust in Germany, were people that in...consciously, intentionally incarnated in order to do just that, with the full understanding that they were going to die just that way. And that that was all built into the incarnation. Now I'm just giving you the straight thing. That when krishna says, look that's how it all is...

ELLSBERG: Wait a minute. This is part of your reality?

RAM DASS: This is part of my reality, yes. This is part of my reality. That the lawfulness of forms including...includes the death. It includes the life and the death and the experiences. It's not lawful in the fatalistic sense that it was from there fixed. It's there, but all interactive law. It's the law of everything in the universe related to everything else. It's a maha computer program. OK? Imagine how he would have seen it. Now let me just deal with the issue about Buddhism and violence, and _____, because I think, I don't want to skirt that issue. It's a key issue. Now is this all right, or do you want to stop?

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 97

RAM DASS: Violence and...violence in that sense of one person to another comes out of qualities in people of incredible fear and incredible greed and incredible paranoia. And that is all rooted in ignorance about who they are. So that I would say that somebody who killed another person, for the most part...here's the critical thing about what Krishna is saying, that is the issue...is that the statement is, if you kill somebody without being attached to the fruits of your actions, go ahead. Now you can't think, you can't even think of a situation in which you do that. Because within the moral realm of good and evil and doers, all action is motivated action. See when I was a psychologist we assumed all human action was motivated by human desires. And as long as that is the case, as long as an action is motivated there is an attachment to the fruits of the action. And if there is any attachment to the fruits of the action on a personal level, we can't do it. And the only way it would be possible to kill, were if you, as Gandhi said, had made yourself into zero. Then what you would do is what you would do. You would be at that point beyond law. And you would act within the law because

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 98

form is within law, you would act within the law, but from a place outside of the law, beyond the place of good and evil. You would see what is and then you would do what you do. But to the extent that you are in that space, you are tuned to the totality of what is and you could only act in that way if it were in the...in the... what's called in China 'the tao'. In the harmony of all things. And it wouldn't be for you to decide. It wouldn't be an intellectual decision. It wouldn't come from that level. It would come from the level of the cat who killed the mouse, except at a higher level of that same process. So it's like...it's like, _____ as master of that deed. It would come from our empty mind, come out of empty. It's like the Tibetan teacher, the monk comes, Marpa, somebody like that comes and says, teach me, teach me, and he says, no. And he says, if you don't teach me I'm going to jump off the cliff. And he says, go ahead. And he jumps off the cliff. And he looks down and there he is flat, and he says, promising student. He says bring him up. And he puts him back together again. Now that's one of those stories. But what it is, I'm talking about a place in which he could be at a place in relation to the law or understanding

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 99

it where he could actually support somebody committing suicide.

ELLSBERG: Can I bring something up?

RAM DASS: Sure. I'm finished. I mean in a sense we can....

ELLSBERG: OK. First I don't want, and I'm sure you don't want to, but we won't leave our discussion at the level of citing this authority versus that authority, whether it's Krishna or Gandhi. But I think it deserves attention here if I'm not mistaken. That there are two different teachings here, that actually are opposed. Buddha did not endorse Krishna's teaching by the ~~Ba~~hagavad-Gita. It's a flat contradiction. Buddha says, this, this, and this, therefore, follow the eight-fold path, and the eight-fold path says, therefore you should follow the eight-fold path, and he's translating _____.

RAM DASS: And it says, no killing.

ELLSBERG: And no killing. And it says, not without

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 100

attachment, not with attachment. No killing.

RAM DASS: OK, you want me to talk to that?

ELLSBERG: OK, isn't that...first I want to say, am I wrong in saying, that's different from Krishna's teaching.

RAM DASS: That is, they're talking about...it's like talking about oranges and bananas as I was shown....

ELLSBERG: Well, Buddha, it doesn't say, it doesn't matter....

RAM DASS: You asked me and I'm telling you the answer.

ELLSBERG: And I'm interrupting. That's what I'm doing. That's what I do. I do what I do.

MAN'S VOICE: We're not allowed to interrupt?

ELLSBERG: Yes, you are. But if we could just finish this first.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 101

WOMAN'S VOICE: If they think you are, you are.

MAN'S VOICE: _____?

WOMAN'S VOICE: No, it's up to them. That was what we....

ELLSBERG: Says Martha. She'll tell you...

RAM DASS: The point is that in most spiritual teachings there is a distinction made between what are called practices and what is called the acts of realized beings. And everything that Buddha taught were methods to become enlightened. What happens when you are enlightened is a whole other ball game, and the Zen crazy wisdom school describes that aspect of Buddhism better than anything else. And that is anything. Anything goes. So that's really, they were talking about different things at that point.

ELLSBERG: OK, I would like to say, I am not aware in my tiny scholarship on this, which is just as a beginner understand, but tell me if I'm wrong. I'm not aware of words attributed to Buddha, which have this point, once you are at the farther shore, once

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 102

you are enlightened through the cycles....

RAM DASS: He never talks about that.

ELLSBERG: No. Other people say that. Other people say, when you are on the farther shore then you do what you do, whether it's killing or...

RAM DASS: He said to the people I'm talking about it's not relevant.

ELLSBERG: He didn't say that.

RAM DASS: No, of course not.

ELLSBERG: OK, but may I say now that yes, interruptions are....

MAN'S VOICE: It just seems to me that you could cut through a fair amount of this dispute by just acknowledging as you have that you are really just talking about two entirely different domains of perceiving reality. That you're talking at the level of the...the frame of the total context of the universe and it's harmony and the operation of it's laws, and a perspective on its laws, and

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 103

Dan is talking from the standpoint of a certain kind of moral fervor, which may emerge out of that context in some sense. In other words out of some sort of philosophical enlightenment, that out of which the power and strength of his perception came. But I...I just think that you can't argue it.

ELLSBERG: Except you see, I don't agree with that.

RAM DASS: No, I don't either. Because you see that's what this is about. That's what we are doing. We're joining something where we usually stay separate, because I can sit back in my cubby-hole and say Dan's talking on that plane. That's interesting for him. And he can say, well, he's a space case or whatever he might say. But when we try to join this thing. This is exactly the problem we're running into. The problem is the real problem. It's the problem of whether...whether you can be in many planes and still act in harmony with somebody who is seeing, who is committed to action within a plane. And that's part of what we are dialoguing I think.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 104

ELLSBERG: Your question may be, your point may be appropriate to what you've heard us say here, but that means we just haven't made clear what we are drawing on. So now, let's do that. I think both of us, and I wouldn't be...I wouldn't be looking forward to spending the time on this kind of discussion with Ram Dass, if I did not take seriously, both the level of reality that he's addressing there, the cosmic oneness that's a level of reality, that level of truth and the human level of society. And if I didn't accept the possibility, even the likelihood, that to live in the...or to focus on, to identify with the...this other level of reality, the more transcendent oneness, may have relevance to the way you act and what you do and how you feel about the human plane, which and that's the... the human plane is also reality that you also exist....So ultimately we do want to talk about what we do on this human plane, right? I think we are getting to that. But...can I...can I react a little bit now to what you were saying? That...

RAM DASS: Can I first ask whether you...do you feel we heard you?

DANIEL ELLSBERG/ RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 3, PAGE 105

MAN'S VOICE: I guess...I'm not hearing the joining.
I guess that's....

ELLSBERG: No, we're about to join. I meant the
answer will be in what we now should address.

RAM DASS: I wouldn't count on it. It might be, but...

WOMAN'S VOICE: Can I follow up on this...Because
I think maybe it will help the joining, maybe....

BEGIN SIDE 4:

RAM DASS: ...saying, we have a number of levels
we live on simultaneously.

MAN'S VOICE: But I understand that.

RAM DASS: And it's the interaction of those levels
that's what the dialogue is about.

MAN'S VOICE: But you didn't hear me. I said, if
we stay only on that level of argument.

RAM DASS: Who wants to do that?

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 106

MAN'S VOICE: All right. That's my introductory statement, that there's no issue.

RAM DASS: No, there's no issue. Yep.

MAN'S VOICE: I just wanted to see if you agree with that. So that the issue becomes linking the levels. And you can't move back and forth and say, well, look. If we want to link the levels at the other plane this is no problem. You have to keep saying it is a problem.

RAM DASS: Well, you have to keep saying it both is and it isn't a problem. See, if you are going to live in two planes, you've got to live in those two planes. You don't go to this one and deny that, and you don't go to that one and deny this. That's where a different kind of wisdom of action is rooted in. The simultaneity of those two planes. That's why...everytime Dan just goes into that plane, I have to...I'm playing that end, only because...but I'm here because of my involvement in this plane. If it mattered nothing, why would I be sitting here?

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 107

MAN'S VOICE: That's right. You said it, precisely.

RAM DASS: Yeah.

MAN'S VOICE: Can I ask one thing. You know I'm looking for this joining also, and I guess I hear one thing loud and clear, that one thing that connects you is a mutual commitment to the mitigation of mutual suffering. And Richard I have the impression that your way of doing that is by awakening, or helping to awaken people to the...to the relativism of all levels, so no one is completely hooked into one. By contrast I guess what I hear Dan doing is quite the contrary. It's trying to awaken people to the ultimate... the ultimacy of a particular level. To say that we live in this, we're facing tremendous suffering in that sense, and far from trying to put it in a relativistic perspective, we need to come to recognize it as absolutely real, and to come to live in it fully so that we can appreciate it. It's potential for the creation of suffering.

RAM DASS: Yeah. You've done it very well. You've said it very well. And I think you would be defining it too narrowly though to conclude that

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 108

I see the only way to relieve suffering is to educate people out of the illusion of their separateness, although I do see that as a major thing. I think you do that in whatever you do, in the way I'm with my father when I'm helping him to the bathroom. I can be doing that in such a way that I'm helping him to the bathroom and to relieve his suffering and at the same moment I'm doing it in such a way that I am cutting through the illusion of separateness. So that it's not something, it's not an either or the way I see it, OK? Very well stated.

MAN'S VOICE: Yeah, I just wanted to take another _____ and suggest that perhaps the common issue between both positions is the sense of urgency. In your case, the urgency to get free to do that, and Dan's urgency to change social policy now....

ELLSBERG: Well, I'd like to talk. That's really what I want to talk about.

MAN'S VOICE: And that's the one that really sort of grabbed me the most since we....

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 109

ELLSBERG: I think it's useful the way you did last time. I'll do the same and try not to be too long, but addressing a couple...several issues that you raised. On the...the question of Gandhi, of course I agree with you. I don't think Gandhi is perfect from any point of view, and one selects...or necessarily right about this, and that one selects from Gandhi, each of us does, you said, and I made that clear. I don't select his food experiments to follow them or even try them. The self-sufficiency, that makes a lot of sense to me, also, as I've said, but I...I'm not personally doing that. The...my son and daughter both have...like you were you mentioned, both started...have embodied that in their lives. My son is a Catholic priest. My daughter is living as a Sandinista _____ in the countryside. So they live that life, and you must understand I'm challenged by them to adopt their discipline by their example, but I'm not doing that. Now, again, _____.

RAM DASS: I just _____ stands out. Because of the time, that we just move as quickly to the points so that we can keep the dialogue going rather than the richness, because we both know a lot

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 110

of richness.

ELLSBERG: I think that, I hear you unselecting Gandhi's social action, the form of his action. Not his concern, which you share. Not the idea of action, which you are doing. And remember..... I mean I want to remember, what you are doing in this field, is what I mostly do. It's not something different from what I do. We both talk, and we educate, that's what we mostly do. Moreover, I don't want to...I don't want to and I want to correct something here, focus on the specific form that Gandhi invented of mass civil disobedience. The reason I really raised that question was because I suspected it was symptomatic of an attitude that formed. It was symptomatic of an attitude and a general form of religion, of action, which I suspect you reject in a general form. And not only for yourself, but because you suspect that it's not right for society at this time. Your answer does not...was a perfectly good answer. It is the same answer I could give for not doing a given action let's say myself. I don't think it's the right time. It's not right for me, it's not right for the time. I don't happen to think this is a big year...my own opinion for civil disobedience

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 111

and so on. I'm not doing...I don't expect to do much this summer. And your answer was in that line. So let's put civil disobedience to one side.

RAM DASS: Just a little aside, that's kind of interesting. That Gandhi was trained as a lawyer and that he understood the workings of the legal structure. So when he walked into it, he walked into it knowing exactly how to play in that field. I was not trained as a lawyer. And I can feel that there is a part of me that has a...looking because I have a family full of lawyers, and I see what a morass of confusion what a lot of law is, and I see the way in which some of it works. And I have a fear of law, of getting enmeshed in the legal system. I can feel that in me, OK. It's as if I...I'm going to be very careful before I choose to enter into that arena to play because is that the way I want to spend my time, dealing with judges of a certain kind of consciousness, and lawyers with a certain kind of motivation, if that's going to be the optimum thing to do. So there's a whole way in which I'm not doing it partly out of a whole lot of things...in the differences in Gandhi's training and my training also. OK.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 112

I just wanted to add that in.

ELLSBERG: I'm not trained as a lawyer. I'm trained as a defendant. But it's interesting what you say, because I would guess, for instance, very easily, that your family background and presence, if there are lawyers in your family, has some bearing on your choice.

RAM DASS: I think it does probably. It does.

ELLSBERG: But I'm not so...that even gives me more reason for looking at the more general question. I conjecture about you...your understanding these things, that the concept which doesn't...let me put it this way. Unless I'm mistaken your concept of evil is not...it hasn't, it really does not occur in Hinduism. Am I wrong?

RAM DASS: Sure. It occurs on the plane of good and evil as I said. Sure, Ravana and Ram and...

ELLSBERG: They were. There were people?

RAM DASS: Yeah. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. The Rashasha's are all evil.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 113

ELLSBERG: OK. I'll take that back. The....

RAM DASS: The...in fact they're...part of the reason that Krishna tells Arjuna to fight is because the people on the opposite side were representing a Dharma. They were representing a set of actions that were...that were considered evil, in the sense that they were taking people away from the way of things, the harmony of things. They had cheated and they had exploited and they had done a number of things.

ELLSBERG: Now, if I'm wrong...I may be very wrong on this point and I want to be corrected about the way you see things, your approach. But I'll put it in terms of this question. I asked myself on the plane today coming, did you take seriously Gandhi's notion of an evil action, as opposed to an evil person, which is a concept he does reject. He doesn't look at the intellects as the forces of evil. But he looks at people like everybody.

RAM DASS: Yes. I do buy evil action. I do buy evil action, yes.

ELLSBERG: You do?

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 114

RAM DASS: There is action that increases suffering in the world. And I think that people that wittingly, intentionally, continue to produce the bomb, knowing that it was an instrument of suffering, and with no understanding that it was a beneficial....

ELLSBERG: There isn't anybody like that.

RAM DASS: So there's nobody...

ELLSBERG: Did you realize that when you said that? That's a null class. Are you aware of that?

RAM DASS: I understand...

ELLSBERG: You did know that? Well, what were you going to say about such people if they existed. I'm saying there are no people who participate in the bomb, perceiving it as having nothing but causing suffering. No effects other than causing suffering.

RAM DASS: Yes.

ELLSBERG: I'm saying there are no such people. But what were you going to say was true of such

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 115

people? You were going to say something which I interrupted.

RAM DASS: I lost it.

ELLSBERG: Were you going to say something about them?

RAM DASS: I guess so, but I don't know anymore.

MAN'S VOICE: You were saying they were evil actions.

RAM DASS: Yeah, I was saying that they were evil actions.

ELLSBERG: You weren't going to say that they were evil people.

RAM DASS: And I was saying that an evil action would be something in which a person intentionally acted in a way to create suffering.

ELLSBERG: Interesting. Very interesting. Because another note that I made to myself on the plane, is

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 116

that it just struck me as I used the word evil is that the word evil is usually used in terms of evil motives, and evil foresight. A willingness and an intention to do evil. And that is the basis by which people distinguish themselves from evil people. That's the basis on which they see those people as evil.

RAM DASS: As evil.

ELLSBERG: As evil. No, that's tautological, but the basis on which they see them as different, as essentially different and other from themselves. They know that whatever they do they don't do it from evil motives. But when they say that Johnson as ^{*Townsend Hoopes*} ~~Thompson~~ Booth (?) said, "was not an evil man in the sense that Hitler was." What is he saying? He didn't act from what he perceives as the kind of motives that Hitler perceives Hitler as acting on. And having said that, most people dropped the word evil from the discussion. And if the person doesn't have evil motives or evil intention...

RAM DASS: No, they are evil acts...

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 117

ELLSBERG: They do not pretend to...

RAM DASS: Any act...any act that comes out of ego in relation to other people could be considered an evil act.

ELLSBERG: Well, I'm going to use the word evil...

RAM DASS: That's a far out...it comes out only from ego, because it's out of what I want from me and I will use you to get it. And I would say that we are dealing with a society in which violence is so rampant at every corner in every form of life in relationship to the Americas and everything that it's very hard to play with the word evil without looking at oneself so hard and realizing the amount of violence and the amount of evil in one's life that it's a tricky one to play the issue of degree.

ELLSBERG: Let me relate that to...

RAM DASS: Except when you come back to the issue of massacre at that point.

ELLSBERG: This is fine. This is fine so far. And

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 118

I'm not going to reject your interpretation here. I'll just say to understand how I use the word if you like it's in a very technical sense. It isn't the way most people...I'm going to use the word evil as if...as if it had nothing to do with intention.

RAM DASS: Yeah, OK, just acts. Evil acts.

ELLSBERG: And I'm not going to, that would suggest that it could be applied to an earthquake, but I'm not going to apply it to an earthquake or a volcano. I'm going to talk about human actions that have human consequences, and I'm going to talk about those consequences being evil or the acts being evil without saying anything at all about the motives.

RAM DASS: You can do that. You're defining the situation. OK, fine. Go ahead. Go ahead.

ELLSBERG: That's my definition, my use of the term. It's my definition. But it's a usage. All right, now, let me move from that...but it's related to the question of urgency. It seems to me that the focus on the dwelling within plane of reality

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 119

in which one perceives the eternity of everything, of the all, the invulnerability of the all, the non-contingency and the connectedness, the lack of separation, the lack of duality, etc., etc. To dwell and focus on that reality and live on can open your eyes to important truths about the human plane. And lead to useful, as I would see them, useful and valuable inventions and new actions on the human plane.

RAM DASS: Undoubtably.

ELLSBERG: But, and here's my argument with you at this stage. As I perceive it, it can also blind you to truths about the human plane. Now of course, one recognizes the human plane is different. That is implicit in the perception that there are different planes. That very concept. The human plane you want...you know, does not have the same attributes as this other plane that you are talking about. But I'm saying...from...

RAM DASS: ?

ELLSBERG: I'm saying that I believe that you yourself and others can blind yourself and others to important aspects of the truth....

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 120

RAM DASS: And I just make the distinction that I made before when he raised the issue, that if we use one plane to the exclusion of the other, it has exactly that effect.

ELLSBERG: Well, no, yes, but I'm moving beyond that.

RAM DASS: Well, I don't think that's...to me that's not even an open issue to discussion because the more planes you are conscious on the more your act will be optimal.

ELLSBERG: But no...I'm agreeing with you. I'm agreeing with you.

RAM DASS: Then there's...there isn't a....

ELLSBERG: Somebody else. I think, I mean you just said, I am focussing as if the human plane were a _____ of ultimacy. As if it were an ultimate reality. As if I were excluding this other reality. Actually I'm not, and I could explain what I mean by that. I haven't had...I've had some of the same experience as Ram Dass _____ as a

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 121

matter of fact. And I believe I know exactly what he's referring to, experientially as a matter of fact. And I accept it as a reality. So I think I am focussing on that. I'm saying, it's a question of how much my focus is on one versus the other, not to exclusion of the other. Not to the exclusion. But I'm suggesting that one of us, you...focusses so much on the relatively speaking, relatively, while you look at both, so much on this cosmic plane in effect, as to blind yourself and others to certain aspects of the human thing...And the same would be true of me from the other way. Relatively speaking I know it's...

RAM DASS: That is why we are having this dialogue. Exactly.

ELLSBERG: That's why we're having the dialogue. When I say we have to learn from each other...I think we both...

RAM DASS: Yes. Exactly.

ELLSBERG: However in contrast to John's point if I can say that, I think we both do recognize the

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 122

relevance and reality of both planes. But it's a question of the relative emphasis and what the effects of the relative emphasis are. And if I can now just pursue that...

RAM DASS: I did say earlier that the problem of people getting into the higher plane and denying it, and I realize that as long as you deny it, you weren't free. And it means that you can't have, when you use the word focus on one plane versus the other, the aim is to include all of them, not to focus on one at all, out of balance. They are all....

ELLSBERG: Pressure me, if you listen, you'll think more. You may not have heard me talk about the...your, the higher plane and the other plane very much it's true. But I would hope you realize that I do recognize its reality and I do think about it.

RAM DASS: Well, that's a bit of a loaded question.

ELLSBERG: OK, you think perhaps not. Let me maybe go on to that. I will go on...I have two points, and the first one I will say though is directly to

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 123

your point. I have an argument then, not only with Ram Dass, and not only with someone who comes from his perspective, his overall perspective which includes both realities. There are other people that I have an argument with who come to a...that I have an argument with whose position is...is quite distinguishable from yours. Let me mention two. You'll see...you'll see the relation....

RAM DASS: Are we talking about urgency now?

ELLSBERG: Yeah, it's coming right to urgency. Yes. See I think...

RAM DASS: I don't mean to...

ELLSBERG: No, I want to say, I think there are three positions, I could make that are related and quite distinguishable, which lead to less of a sense of urgency than I believe is appropriate on the human level. And you can still use the word urgent, but I will still say, I don't hear you feeling it as being as urgent as I think it is. And let me mention three of those planes. I... I could...four...four distinguishable positions. One is...the general Krishna position let's say, which you've described. And the...the unity, the

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 124

eternity and so forth. The mystic position.

RAM DASS: The mystic position, yes.

ELLBERG: Second, a standard Christian position, held by many people including a growing number of totally literal minded and strongly committed fundamentalists, but of course, much more broad than that. God will not let it happen to us. Many people believe that in their heart. It won't happen. The third position. Secular. The President. No president we elect, unless he goes absolutely out of his mind will press that button. Fourth position, I don't care about presidents, but capitalists, communists, whoever they are, men of power, want the world to go on. They will not unless they go clinically insane, they will not let it happen. That's another point of view. These are all distinguishable. But you can see that they lead...they lead though to the notion that things can get bad, there can be even little wars. There can certainly...accidents, malfunctions, this and that. But the world, when you mentioned that there were mystics who told you, the world isn't going to go now, school will not be out. It's not only mystics who say that. It's republicans and democrats and...and followers of the moral minority...majority...

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 125

the moral majority, and very fundamental...it's all kinds of people who say that. It isn't going to happen, and they relate it, remember, they are not just saying, it's it my gut, I don't feel it coming this month, as Robinson Jeffers said in a poem. He believed it was coming, but he said, I don't feel it yet this month. But...they also have a metaphysical position that tells it won't happen in this way. Now what I'm seeing, I don't...I can recognize all the positions. I don't trust those positions. I don't live in that position of trust. I can envy those who do. By the way I don't say that I'll be any... I don't necessarily mean that what I do in my if you like, state of fear, will either work better than what they do, or work at all. Or even I'm not confident that I won't worsen the situation.

RAM DASS: That's very important for us to recognize.

ELLSBERG: Let's put that aside. I understand all that. I understand all that.

RAM DASS: But it's important for us to recognize in his question of bringing it back to the question

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 126

of this plane.

ELLSBERG: Now, to....

RAM DASS: I really want you to hear that point.

ELLSBERG: Yeah, I do.

RAM DASS: That you don't know that anything you
are doing is any better than all these other....

ELLSBERG: I have given so many examples of that.
I know that I have given some...

RAM DASS: OK.

ELLSBERG: But...having said all that. I mean, and
I think can convince you by the way that I do feel
that.

RAM DASS: No, I'll...it's OK, you don't have to
list all those...

ELLSBERG: See out of fear, you can act more...more
calmly and effectively in various ways. I nevertheless

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DAAS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 127

distrust that metaphysics that leads to that conclusion. Believe that it's not appropriate... it leads to an inappropriate lack of urgency on this level. And that that...I will put to you by the way, is manifest I think in the behavior of people...good night....including yourself that...really including most of the people in the country. I don't think most people in the country are as passive as they are, which is more than you or me. Simply from _____ and everything. I think really most of them have a set of beliefs and premises that tell them they are not compelled and called on to do these things. And they are widely shared beliefs with a good deal of evidence. I happen to think they are wrong.

RAM DASS: I know you do. And they happen to think you're wrong.

ELLSBERG: Therefore....yes...and they may be right.

RAM DASS: And there we are.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 May 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 128

ELLSBERG: No wait, wait, we don't need to do that. Not["] there we are.["] Now, come on, now. That's why we're having this discussion. And that's why I talk to them. Now...I don't just happen to think, and so...I am saying, if I'm right. If I should happen to be right. That somewhat more urgency is appropriate, which doesn't tell you exactly what to do or what's right to do, the action you might take with a great sense of urgency, might be very different from the action I would take, different spirit. It might be better, but.... But still there would be a meaning to the fact that you would choose in a sense of urgency, or not in a sense of urgency. And I'm saying, it might be right to be acting in a sense of urgency. If it is right, that doesn't mean that you throw out all of the metaphysics of the premises, or everything is reversed.

RAM DASS: No, not at all.

ELLSBERG: But it does mean that you learn, you look again at them. It could mean...It could mean that your interpretation of them has the ability to lead you astray. That it lead you to give less urgency than would...not only you personally,

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 129

I mean the people who feel this way, it's led them a little astray. It has not...allowed them to perceive the urgency that is there.

RAM DASS: I understand.

ELLSBERG: I really do think that quite systematically I'll put it in these terms...My urgency especially comes now from a perception which I think I was stimulated in by you. And putting it together of course with other things that I know it leads me to a sense of urgency. So let me now, honor your work, to pay tribute to something that I learned from you, from our actual earlier discussion. At least I now define the problem differently, whether it's more urgent or not. Or...your emphasis on the oneness and the subordinate aspect of the sort of relatedness of all people, the lightness of people, either levels of this led you to question me and challenge the tone that I took that our leaders are quite different from us. We're...I should say significantly different from us. You heard me as saying that they were a different species. Or so I was saying. Now I had said the opposite. But then when I asked myself. I don't know if I told you this or not, maybe I said it on the phone. Did I?

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 130

RAM DASS: Yeah.

ELLSBERG: Yes. Well then I won't go too much into it, but when I asked myself why did you hear me as saying that they were different species, you were hearing correctly I realized that I was emphasizing their difference from us. Not that they were different species, but that they were a different branch of the species. I mentioned they were men by the way, which I think by the way you underrate as a fact to you that I'll just mention. But beyond their being man they were a special kind of man, I have to say. And when I was led to ask myself now do I really believe that. He's challenged me that...that their actions stem from their differentness. I realized when I asked the question that way that I didn't really believe that. That although I thought...I had been thinking they must be somewhat different or they wouldn't make these...give these orders. When I asked myself, would different...would different men who had gotten to that position or myself have really acted differently, I realized I didn't believe that.

RAM DASS: Right. I don't either.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 131

ELLSBERG: Now, I do see a difference on the human plane. But you see my whole...my emphasis, my relative emphasis doesn't lead me to see differences, where your emphasis leads you to see your differences. In this case, I was led by your emphasis, to revise my own understanding, and I did reflect it in this course, and realize that...that I somehow always knew, but didn't reflect in my analysis, that the differences between me and ^{Wick}Winebarger and MacNamara and all those people were not the problem. And that they were...that, however, I do see a difference in our roles.

RAM DASS: Oh absolutely.

ELLSBERG: So that difference that I'm led to see, which I think you are less quickly led to see, is a difference that I would make...

RAM DASS: Oh, I see a difference in roles, certainly.

ELLSBERG: Well, and the effect that that has...

RAM DASS: Oh, it's incredible.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 132

ELLSBERG: So I'm led to say, people just like ourselves, can do...for the best of reasons, the best of reasons, evil on a magnitude that Tamerline only aspired to. Is not technically in choosing (?). By the way, their reasons are not necessarily that different. Tamerlaine wanted to bring order. Oppenheimer wanted to end the war. My Harvard sectionman, James Colmant, was president of Harvard but took over a freshmen section when I was a freshman, in Nat Sci 4, here where we are now... that was in 1948-49. He was three years away from having advised that the bomb be used on a industrial plant closely surrounded by workers' housing. So that the...the effect of it on people could be demonstrated to the maximum effect. He was the chief person advising that. Oppenheimer agreed with him. They both agreed on the reason. Do you know what their reason was?

WOMAN'S VOICE: _____

ELLSBERG: What? I thought you said, to save lives in the war, but they had a much bigger...

RAM DASS: The Soviet Union.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 133

ELLSBERG: That too, but that wasn't the big reason. Actually I haven't mentioned it, unless you studied it, the real reason. By the end of the war they both realized that they didn't need that bomb... well they did think they would save a lot of American lives, but that wasn't what they were doing either. You will find this hard to believe, but I have the quotes with me. They both proposed to end ~~the~~ war. With nuclear weapons in the world war must cease. But people will not realize that if they have not seen a demonstration on people. Alamagordo will not teach them that.

MAN'S VOICE: Why two bombs then?

ELLSBERG: They opposed that. One would have been enough. They didn't choose the two. But there should be one bomb on people so that war would be abolished. By the way, it's the same motive that Nobel claimed for dynamite. And Teller, by the way, agreed, it had to be used on people. Teller and York worked on the bomb, worked on the H bomb. Because the A bomb didn't do it. They could see that. It wasn't big enough. 'The H bomb would end ~~the~~ war. Is that a good purpose? They had a logic. They had...and so forth. They

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS

1 MAY 1984

SIDE 4, PAGE 134

had the best of purposes. And what I'm saying is, I don't conclude that Conant was a thug after all, or even a fool, or any different from me, and I'm neither a thug or a fool. That doesn't entirely reassure me though, or change my sense of urgency. It tells me my reasons for feeling urgent. The positions of power in the world today do not have to be manned by thugs or fools or psychotics for the world to fucking blow up. And it may all come back. But I'm focussed. I can even accept that. But I focus on the problem of it's going now and going this way. And let me now be even more plain. I'm not even focussed on the...all life...on the question of all life being killed. That is not what motivates me or presses me. I'm focussed on the probability that people, and in particular my country, but not only my country, are maybe...about to enter an era, very shortly, I mean within years, that's what I mean by urgency. I mean months or years, in which it becomes as commonplace to slaughter people in lots of 100,000 as it is now to slaughter people now in lots of 10 on buses in Israel or in El Salvador. It becomes conflicts...I don't mean everyday, like that, but it becomes a commonplace phenomenon in that sense, year by year. It could

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 135

go on for a while. That's the urgent world I'm trying to...now, I want to...as I say, I really do come to that in part by saying, we don't have to wait for Idi Amin, who may have simply may not have been such a bad guy. He may just have had syphilis of the brain. That's a good theory. I mean I think he did have syphilis, and he may simply have been reacting out of that. And there was a time when the British thought he was a great guy. Maybe he was. But anyway you don't have to have syphilis of the brain to be dangerous. I'll focus this right on what you said in your paper. You come to it from your point of view, but there are six other ways of coming to the same proposition and they are believed by most people, and in some sense by a lot of people. You said, I don't believe Ronnie would press the button in the end ultimately if he believed it would hurt Nancy. And I believe empirically, whatever route you came to that led you astray. It was wrong. I believe firmly and of course I may be wrong. But I believe firmly and how you helped me believe, not because Ronnie is different from you and me. Because Ronnie is not different from you or me. You or me, I want to say it. And we are not president now. We're

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 136

not trying to be president. We're not Kennedy's
for that matter. _____

in a certain sense of the word. The...you could
have been the President's psychoanalyst in effect
right? So to use the...so, to them I'm saying
most people I believe in their gut, underestimate
the likelihood that Ronnie or Jimmie or Gary would
push that button under certain, a wide variety of
circumstances. It is my belief, I'm in a minority
on this, that I'm right and other people are wrong.
Of course I know, I could be wrong and I have to
hope...I really do hope I'm wrong. But my belief
is, the other people underestimate the degree to
which Gary would press that button. And by the
way, Gary whom I've been pretty happy with up until
now, has taken in the last week to try and be
president by telling the public that Jimmy Carter
was weak on Iran. That doesn't give me the picture
of a president who's going to lead us in a different
path, whatever he says he will do. But...that's
giving hostages to reputation that are going to
lead him, he's implying right now, he says, I
wouldn't go into Central America, but there is
a time to use force. Iran, was that time? That's
what he's telling me? Great. So that's our last
peace candidate that we're facing. And I'm saying

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 137

not because he's different, but because he is not different, those guys I'm telling you will push buttons and you are wrong to think that they won't, despite their love for Nancy. Now where... where do I see your error. On the empirical level because you are looking at them as humans and you are ignoring their organizational role, their institutional role. I don't think Ronnie wants to kill Nancy. I don't know much about their relationship, but I think...well, speculate, no, I mean it doesn't look as hollow as some others we've seen. And...so I don't think he'd be indifferent on that point. I'm not assuming that anyway. But to believe that his love for Nancy, or Gary's love for his wife, would stay his hand again, which of course it might.

RAM DASS: It might.

ELLSBERG: It might. It might. It might. Of course it might. The humanist. But I'm saying to constantly rely on that, to have any trust in that, I think is...

RAM DASS: To rely on it, no. You can't rely on anything.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 138

ELLSBERG: No, no, but I think you underestimate...
I think you underestimate, I think you underestimate
like most people. I'm just saying like most people.
That's...that's...

RAM DASS: Well, that was the Milgram experiment
which showed that people would do things under
really an institutional role that they wouldn't
do personally.

ELLSBERG: What you taught me...what you taught
me was...and I don't know if you remember my saying
it, but I have told the class this. What you made
me reflect on is this. The Milgram people taught
me how you and I as subordinates could do this
sort of things see. But I still...I still lived
in the notion that the superior must be a different...

RAM DASS: Be a subordinate.

ELLSBERG: Yeah. They are all subordinates. They
are the same.

RAM DASS: Within that level it's all lawful
mechanical subordination.

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 139

ELLSBERG: Yeah. That's the way it comes out. But you led me to that perception actually, and you led me to take seriously Kelman's hypothesis on it, which is that basically, they aren't different either. They aren't different either. And the emphasis that I put on their difference...I mean you know they are different in ways that are relevant, but it's a second order relevance. They...they chose to be commander in chief as I said, ~~at. Lama.~~ ^{not} (P) and so forth. But that's not the key point. Strictly speaking, Ford, for example, is an example of somebody who did not run for President. Really had imagined being President, almost surely. And he could have done it. And that's my belief. So that's what gives me the sense of urgency. And it seems to me that the metaphysic that emphasizes owning the compassion and oneness and unity and eternity and vulnerability turns one's eyes away from the....

RAM DASS: That's not the concluding point of that whole thing, no. We've already agreed that only is obviously not the statement.

ELLSBERG: No, no, no. Did I say that? Then I was wrong. That...as heavy an emphasis as you do. I think

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 140

you underrate the differentness of a President in
his role from us. I underrate...

RAM DASS: I....no, no, no....

ELLSBERG: I tend to underrate the human likeness.
I underrate the human likeness.

RAM DASS: OK, OK, OK, I've heard it all then.

ELLSBERG: That's where we differ.

RAM DASS: I see no reason inherent in the nature
of things that a person that is conscious on more
than one plane simultaneously of seeing the laws
in action would in any way bias an interpretation
of whether or not institutional roles are more
powerful than personal motivation.

ELLSBERG: No, but it doesn't....

RAM DASS: Wait a second. Would you just listen for
a second. I do see that I came to that conclusion.
I don't represent myself as someone who sees clearly.
I am seeing as clearly as I can see, and that cuteness
about Nancy and Ronnie came out of another place

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 141

in me. I'm not...not justifying it. But I'm saying that everything that I say doesn't come out of all of my...the greatest wisdom in the world. And that's why I'm learning from you too.

ELLSBERG: _____

RAM DASS: But no, that's part of the issue. So that I hear the institutional, and it's a very interesting question. And I hear that from within a separate individual's perspective about the situation now, it is about as urgent as things get. I mean that's about it. Except if...

ELLSBERG: What the perspective to study?

RAM DASS: Separate individuals. It's among separate individuals. It is about as urgent as things get. Unless somebody is over you at that moment with a knife sticking it into your belly. That might be a moment more urgent, but this is getting about as urgent as things get. And so now the question is, who, at what level of consciousness deals with that urgency how. Well, what does the word urgent mean? Urgent to what? Urgent to what and who wants what how? And that is...is...and

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 142

what will you do for that? Will you throw over what for what? What decisions will you make in terms of how urgent is it? Like, if you are sitting here with all the oxygen that you want. You've got the thought that there won't be...I don't know if this will be good but, if you are in a room where there is only a handful left it's a quite a different thing. And if you are in a perspective in which there's only a handful left you are going to act differently with that urgency than if you are in here. And you will also have an understanding that if this goes, ah well, here I am still. OK? Those lead you to respond to the kind of urgency you are presenting. I don't question that it's as bad as you say. I mean you have now over two years convinced me that it is as bad as you say it is. All right? I'm perfectly hearing all that. OK?

ELLSBERG: Now what to do?

RAM DASS: Now what to do? And how it affects me. And what is the implication behind the reactivity to that urgency, when it comes out of the identification with the separateness and the fear that entails, I have a suspicion although I can't hear it clearly

DANIEL ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 143

because I can't get myself open enough yet to hear it. I'm working as hard as I can. I have a suspicion that that reaction to that kind of urgency, perpetuates something that is at the root cause of the problem, and I am very reticent to jump in only for that reason, OK? At the same moment I hear the urgency. I say, yes, it is urgent. But urgent doesn't direct my action. Urgent merely says, attend to this now. Attend to this now. This is critical because separate existences may end on this planet. Now, how do I feel about that? Yes, they may end. Or they may not. I can't immediately say, oh my god, they shouldn't end. I don't have that feeling. I can't make believe I do. I don't have it. I have a feeling I would like it not to end because I think a human birth is precious, and I will do what I can to help it not, if I can, do, I will do what I can. I'm doing what I can. Because I think that's what...what our acts are, is to preserve life so that people can become more conscious. That's the way I understand the game. At the same moment I don't have that desparateness that if it does end, oh well, that's the way it did, that ground.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 144

ELLSBERG: I hear really what you said. And I think it's all about...not with humans. Here's my response. On the level of action, and again I want to be just a little caveat as Haig would say, and he would say it again, I'm not saying what you should do. That's not...I don't want to say that.

RAM DASS: Yeah. OK. Good.

ELLSBERG: But exploring our different perspectives which we encompass, I think that there is a wide class of action which you shy away from, perhaps quite rightly for you with the following effect for the following reason, because they appear to focus us on the reality of separateness in the human plane. And to acknowledge, to focus on separateness rather than unity...

RAM DASS: Can I just cut through this discussion because I know where you are going with it. I mean I really think I...if that's the point, want to go somewhere else with that? Or is that the point? Because you've made that before and I hear it.

ELLSBERG: I haven't heard you respond to it.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 145

RAM DASS: OK, well, I'll respond then because I hear it all. If I were doing my gig well, if I were doing my gig well, I would be living in the world of separateness, honoring it perfectly, doing what I need to do in the discriminative world of separate players, but the way I would do every action would be in a way that would reinforce the sense of unity. And yet, my action itself would be very honoring of individual differences and discriminative action. And I would do this and not do this, and say yes here and no here, and act now, and not act then. It's the way I would do it, but not the actual self. OK.

ELLSBERG: I hear you, OK.

RAM DASS: OK, now you go ahead.

ELLSBERG: My question is, who does that?

RAM DASS: Who does what?

ELLSBERG: What you are describing.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 146

RAM DASS: We all do it as well as we can.

ELLSBERG: No, who does it well?

RAM DASS: I'm doing it well. As well as I can.

ELLSBERG: I thought I understood you to be saying...

RAM DASS: I'm doing it as well as I can. I mean I don't know many people that are doing it much better than I'm doing it, and I'm doing it as well as I can. What can I say.

ELLSBERG: Well, I think you are doing it well. But you know, when I read in the manuscript, you were saying, people who live well in these two...

RAM DASS: Go ahead. Go ahead. I'm with you, I was just having...

ELLSBERG: In the manuscript when people...

RAM DASS: We're doing very well Dan.

ELLSBERG: ...When people, you said, who really

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 147

understand this other, higher plane of reality, the oneness, as well as the separateness, then they act with full compassion, etc., etc. People in other words who are very enlightened in that level are acting in the following ways. I wrote in the margin, "who?" "Who are these people?" If you want to say you, all right. I'll accept that. The fact is I have the feeling that the people who are strongly imbued with this shall we... mystic point of view, mostly don't act much in the social world in a way that I perceive as useful. They are passive, as I would see it with respect to the social structure. Other than to acknowledge certain evils, certain...caused by ignorance which they will alleviate by meditation and by the example of their enlightenment. The traditional role of the botti satva. But beyond that traditional role I don't see it. Wait, wait... just let me say...In the way that you described. And the exceptions that I do see, I think it's worth noting, are people who have a strong Western influence. They are Western Buddhists, they are Western mystics of a certain kind, who have a strong Christian infusion here or they're Jewish or something else. As of course, Gandhi did, as the Vietnamese Buddhists did with their collective

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 148

experience.

MAN'S VOICE: Martin Luther King.

ELLSBERG: What? As Martin Luther King. I'm saying in other words it is not...they are not purely in the center of that tradition. I do not include in this level of activists, Shochiam ^{Chogyum} Trupla (?) ^{Trungpa (?)} or all the others ones we could name that...I mean, they don't do it. They are not doing it. They may know more of the enlightenment. I say, you said that logically...this is my last point. You said logically there is no reason that you can't see the oneness, see the perfection etc, and act. Of course, there is no...

RAM DASS: I think...

ELLSBERG: But I'm saying...I think for instance if you were to give an example of somebody who really did do it a lot, Martin Luther King, Gandhi... what?

MAN'S VOICE: Einstein.

ELLSBERG: Yeah. By the way, Tribium Trumpa, I was

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 149

very impressed, he quoted, he cited Gandhi as somebody who did do this. But they are exceptional. It is not central to that tradition. And I'm saying it doesn't flow organically from that tradition alone. I think it takes an infusion of western activism and a western conception, which of course you have, and which I have. Which in turn, it happens Gandhi and Martin Luther King and others have.

RAM DASS: Now, I'll say the thing that's most provocative about that. That I think that maybe... I think that you are looking at which actions in terms of what you consider actions that would make that discrimination. Like, for example... let me give you an example. The Chinese were on the borders of India. And they were...and Nehru was trying to decide whether to evacuate Delhi. OK? And he said to one of his ministers, would you ask your guru what to do. And the guy called Maharaji, my guru. And Maharaji said, don't worry, the Chinese are going back. And the next morning the Chinese went back. Now, you can say, at that level, that oh well, that's one of those stories, which you...somebody in your camp asked me to take out of my book, those kind of stories...

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 150

ELLSBERG: Where did you hear the story?

RAM DASS: I heard the story from somebody who was there. At the...heard the Maharaji say that.

ELLSBERG: You didn't hear it from the Maharaji? I'm just trying to figure out where you heard that.

RAM DASS: No, I heard it from somebody who was his companion, who told me what happened. Now let's just take that story as a possibility. Let's not take it as anything more than just a possibility. All I'm arguing is that where the actions are at that level...I'm not trying to pull a mystic sleaze trick, although it sounds that way. But I am suggesting to you that you are interpreting action from an interesting place as to, of course it's going to come from westerners, because you are interpreting it in terms of western action. And that isn't the only kind of action that's making up the ballgame. I would like to point out to you.

ELLSBERG: I know that. I know that. I think I know what you mean there.

RAM DASS: I know you know that.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 4, PAGE 151

ELLSBERG: No, I didn't mean to say that what they are doing is necessarily irrelevant or unhelpful. I don't mean to say that it Tribium Trumpa is not helpful. I don't mean that.

RAM DASS: Yeah, I understand. But I'll make the thing that I think will be most controversial, that maybe this infusion of Western is the infusion of the impurity of the attached mind. I am not clear yet that the action of the Western people is yet coming out...there are moments when, with Martin Luther King, I feel he rose to that place. There are moments when Einstein rose, but there were other moments...

BEGIN SIDE 5:

ELLSBERG: You said Gandhi was...

RAM DASS: Don't say a word. My lawyer is going to have to hear this you know. OK, go ahead.

ELLSBERG: OK, let me get this straight.

RAM DASS: OK, the point that...I think the point that I did make, was that we have to face the possibility that we are only hearing actions of

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 152

one kind. And we are hearing the actions that of course, only Westerners are going to participate in, and that may be their impurity of mind.

ELLSBERG: Let me agree to that. That is possible. And second, the distinction is....OK, I'm saying, what Tribium Trupa do, and what your Maharaji, is that how you say his name?...did, is a form of action, a form of relevant action, helpful action, it could be, you know perfectly well possibly. It's a category of action. All I meant to say, was not that they did...I did not mean to say that they did nothing relevant. The implication of your passage and I think other things you say, is though that they might also act in Western ways, but with a different spirit and to a different effect. Not just by, let us say, what....

RAM DASS: No, they might. Oh, absolutely.

ELLSBERG: And I want to say empirically. I want to really put it to you strongly. Empirically, it might, I would say, they don't on the whole. They might but they don't. And I think that there is a law, a human law involved there. That the focus on the one suggests that they shouldn't.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 153

RAM DASS: What about the Sarvodaya Movement?

ELLSBERG: Well, no, what I was saying, Gandhi, it's what I said to Trumpa actually, when I discussed this with him. The reason I was talking to him by the way was trying to reconcile him at Allen Ginsburg's request. It turned out he wanted to talk to me, Trumpa, and Allen wanted me to talk to him. And the reason he wanted me to talk to him was to reconcile Trumpa to sitting on the tracks, which Trumpa had been very opposed to. So, I was having a little discussion which had an objective, which was to try to stop him..._____ on this plane. But I was impressed by his answers. It was a good discussion. I was impressed by him. But the question arose...I said, did he see Gandhi as merely expressing something that was already there fully flowered in Buddhism or mysticism, or as having at this late 20th century date made something of an invention, a development, an innovation? I didn't know what his answer would be. And he said, oh, no question, of course, he made an invention. He changed...

RAM DASS: That's a creative response to that situation.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 154

ELLSBERG: I said to be clear on this...what I'm saying is, I said, I have the impression that in the Buddhist tradition, botti satvas generally work to end the suffering of all humans by their own work on themselves, of enlightenment, by meditation, and in many stories by magic, by a kind of magic.

RAM DASS: And by service.

ELLSBERG: And by service, but of a kind of personal face-to-face service.

RAM DASS: No, no, it can be all kinds of service.

ELLSBERG: Well, here's what I asked. He may be wrong, but I'll tell you his answer. I said, I have the impression, I wonder if there are examples, not being a scholar on it at all, if there are really examples in the tradition of the 40 satvas who organized people in an institutional organized way, the loose institution of a satyagra, that kind of thing, to oppose a social evil. And he said, no. Actually he was the one who then spelled out his it's more magic, it's enlightenment and so forth. And I said, do you think of any...this is significant...

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 155

he said, do you think of...I said, do you think of any examples of a botti satva who did operate in that way. And he said, Gandhi.

WOMAN'S VOICE: Oh my goodness. Trumpa said that?

ELLSBERG: And by the way, Allen told me the conversation had been very helpful in the end, but he was responding to my question. So what I'm really saying, I think...still, I won't say it again. I'll say this point for the last time. I think when you look at Gandhi...

RAM DASS: You are talking about creative responses...

ELLSBERG: No, I think when you look at Gandhi, you suspect that his...you have a concern that his civil disobedience campaigns reflected his impurity.

RAM DASS: His modern...his political thinking. That's an interesting question. OK, I hear it. Now let me just have a moment and I'll...that's a good one.

RAM DASS: First, I feel that the creative innovative response is expected of a botti satva, or a _____

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 156

being it's conscious. It's not...the creativity in in the response, not in the essence of what the issue is, but in the response of how you deal with the existential situation. So that's true. And I...I don't hear any of the aspects of Gandhi...I'll tell you, for example, I don't find Gandhi's civil disobedience other than that of a very conscious being. What I find less than a conscious being is his sadness when it didn't...when the Hindus and Moslems couldn't get together. His inability to appreciate the way things are. I mean the pain of his feeling he failed. That was a place in which he lost it as far as I am concerned. He lost his spacious awareness of how it all was into his pain. The most of it...I don't see that the civil disobedience came out of other than extremely clear consciousness. And I think he worked hard at doing that. I mean that whole story of the way in which he meditated for months before the salt march. That came out of the fact that he realized he had for those acts...had to come out of that place in him. And I think at those places he was very conscious. I think he slipped in other areas. But I don't think that was the area.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 157

ELLSBERG: I think my conjecture was wrong. That if there...

RAM DASS: I don't really feel that about civil disobedience.

ELLSBERG: No, very briefly, I don't know if you believe me...

RAM DASS: I'm glad you all find this interesting.

ELLSBERG: We haven't talked about this much but let me say where I think I've had...where I do know the plane of reality that you refer to so much. You described it, I think. I feel I've been there. I know that. And it wasn't on meditation. But it was frequently on acid. It was the first experience of acid and essentially I always have that experience on acid. I've almost never had a bad trip, it so happens. And I think one can get it quite different from the description of other people's trips, you can get a very different sense of paranoid, sinister world and separateness, and so forth. But that isn't my acid experience. And I think it's...that everything you describe about your perceptions of the world of altered reality sound very familiar to me from my experience on acid.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 158

RAM DASS: I'll answer that, because I thought that my response last time was a little too...I left it too lightly and I can see that we hadn't finished with it. It wasn't digested properly. I don't question for a moment that you have experienced these places. There is a...sequence of events that occurs in a consciousness, where after you experience it and then come back in a normal way from consciousness, so to speak, it's how you deal with that material. And there are ways in which you keep them as experiences, as discreet experiences. And there are ways in which it flips your way of dealing with reality. So that you start this other part, that's called...so that you are asking...you are demanding more and more, you're asking a lot of the integrated part of it. And these are sequences of process of using those experiences. Not that you haven't had the experiences, and so of course they are familiar to you. And I recognize that and that's part of the basis on which we can talk. I... I feel when I listen to you that there is work for you to do in integrating them...those experiences into your life. And that to me is something that you haven't felt as top priority, because you had other work to do. And I have felt that as top priority you see. And those...that's really where

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 159

the...the differences lie. And therefore if I had spent all the time I had spent, trying to integrate that...those experiences so that they are one, spending all the time in political social concerns, I might be...I would be quite a different person now. And I might be sitting there equally as well. Because a lot of it is just where we've invested our consciousness. Now why one chooses to invest, from my point of view that has something very deep connected to it. And that...it's like a karmic issue of what your work is on this birth. From my point of view, OK. Now you say, well, that's saying nothing. But from my point of view, all I'm saying is there are individual differences in who takes an experience and says, this is a valid experience, I must integrate it, versus that's an interesting experience, I'll certainly enjoy having it again. And they're just different, it's different stages...different work, not even better or worse. They are just different.

ELLSBERG: Let me, I understand you. But...and you are right about where I am now. In fact I have been lately. But it so happens you are seeing

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 160

me at a certain point in my life. You know, just the last two years. In fact, I'm not...to leave the acid behind. I don't think that was critical to it, I would say, for instance, as you have said, that Gandhi's social actions came out of this conscious...type of consciousness. And my openness to that, and my aspiration to act in that mode was very much a part of my life for a sustained period, during which, among other things, I was around people, who thought that way. We were that way. We were very Gandhi. And at the time of the Pentagon Papers, actually, which was an act that in a way took a couple of years. It was a two year period, before it came out. That was the mood I was in and I was trying to make that...I wanted that to be a Gandhian action. And it was in many ways in spirit.

RAM DASS: Yeah, definitely. It was.

ELLSBERG: I think it was well done.

RAM DASS: Beautiful.

ELLSBERG: But I mean you weren't up close enough. One could only judge close...

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 161

RAM DASS: From inside you could say that it was done well.

ELLSBERG: But it was good. A good action as they say.

RAM DASS: A good action.

ELLSBERG: And I was in that spirit, and by the way, rather consciously, several of the people who were involved in that did not want to be close to the trial. They left us and went to Los Angeles. And I was now surrounded by people as far from that consciousness as it was possible to be. In the trial and for a long time since. Most of the time since. I would say for example, I was very much in that spirit again during the period on Rocky Flats, which was a matter of...a period, especially when I was on the tracks. So a matter of months, so...And there have been a few other times like that when I get back into it. Most of the time I would say, I'm not living or acting nowadays in that...in a Gandhian spirit, I would say, as you've perceived it. But it's not that I have not ever done that.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 162

RAM DASS: Yeah, no, I understand that. And it's interesting how when you are doing it, how absolutely intuitively harmoniously right on you feel. That's the kind of issue...I hear that. I hear...I agree that you have not only had the experiences of that state, but you have had moments when they integrate.

ELLSBERG: See, I suspect that I may have misjudged your relation to this, actually....Simply...I think there...you may actually have idiosyncratic reserves, reservations about specifically the legal...you know civil disobedience ~~per~~se, that I misread as being somewhat broader.

RAM DASS: Yeah, they are not necessarily spiritually based. They are not not though. I mean I don't know. I mean I've just got to struggle with what I've have to work with.

ELLSBERG: When it comes to you in action. When it comes in the realm of action. In the realm of understanding I still think it would be...you are led rather systematically to overestimate likenesses and...and underestimate propensities for evil.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 163

I think in the way that is not peculiar to a mystical Eastern tradition. It's shared by lots of traditions, I just think they are all missing...

RAM DASS: I think it's interesting, because I think you underestimate evil. Because as far as Buddha pointed out, everybody that takes a human incarnation is caught in the five hindrances. Which is lust, greed, hatred and ill will, sloth and torpor and doubt. All of which are the seeds of the evil action. So as far as I am concerned, every human being at any act that comes out of ego is doing exactly that. So to me, I don't think I underestimate it because you only focus on certain ones. I seem to see it in all action at that level.

ELLSBERG: Now, I just add to the Buddhist perspective, by the way, I venture to say this, it's not my _____ . I'm saying I think the Buddhists like most intellectual traditions, most in the world, underestimate the reality of organizational and role influences on human behavior. They underestimate the significance of that. They tend to look at human behavior as if it could all be analogized to individual face to face relationships, even if they say otherwise. That's really how they are reasoning.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 164

And they are really underrating, is what I'm now beginning to perceive, and as I say I didn't invent this perspective. But what I'm now beginning to perceive as the significance of the role involvement and the institution...

RAM DASS: What's going through my mind is a thing from the Tao Te Ching, which says, your rule people as you cook small fish. I was thinking, it was just in relation to whether the Eastern mystical literature had a concept of role that was...

ELLSBERG: But the Tao...but the Tao is literature... is anarchist. It has a peculiar focus on the evils of state. That's unusual.

RAM DASS: But it's Eastern mysticism.

ELLSBERG: So, so...right, right. But there is a strand that...does see this. Does see the point. But I would like...there's just a few people left, and maybe they want to...

RAM DASS: They can go. It doesn't matter. We're doing fine. Everybody's here because they want to

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 165

be here. I'm here because I want to be here. I'm having a good time.

ELLSBERG: I'm anxious...My throat is dry. There are some personal things that I would like to bring out at this point, if I can get a drink of water.

RAM DASS: This is related to a point that we've made earlier, and not tonight, but earlier. And didn't get into the manuscript actually. Was the one about what I felt your role could be. Because I think when you just pass by and say, well, it may...when I said, their role forced them to get further and further away, the way they got into it. They said, well, this justifies CIA actions and then that, and then that leads to that, and obviously...it's the old, well, if we did that, we can do this, and so on. I think that you are in a unique position of knowing that sequence. And that the part of helping the reconciliation of consciousness in the society is allowing, instead of separating them out as scapegoats anyway, to show exactly how we do that process to what we did, and so that we can see how to get back. Because at this point it's just...it makes them feel like...

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 166

it makes them feel like separate entities, and a privy to a world that they must be doing....Because there is a way...

ELLSBERG: I agree. I agree.

RAM DASS: But there's a way...there's a way in which you always suggest...You do agree with me. I know that. I know that. But there is a way in which you suggest motives to them. You attribute motives to them that are...that make it...I think there are...well, let me put it this way, we both agree that often they are motivated by the protection of their own power. All right? That leads to a lot of decisions like...especially in an election year, but in general it leads to a lot of misuse...

ELLSBERG: But remember, they see that as part of their explicit mission.

RAM DASS: But that's a different issue. That's a little bit of rationalization. There are a lot of ways in which they are using secrecy and all that in the other set of motives of filling their role optimally. Then there are the ones that are doing it for their personal power. And I think

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 167

that's important that we point that out too. In other words, all those things, to make them humor us. To bring it back in rather than pushing it away, because otherwise, that's giving them license to get further away it seems to me. And it has to do with our consciousness and the way we deal with that. That's...and you're in the role to do that. It seems.

ELLSBERG: All right. I agree with all you are saying, including my role. And the point is, I want to...I really am paying tribute, I want to be heard that way. It may not be clear yet how it works, but I am saying, I have this perspective increasingly and I got it from you. This is an example of learning from you and from your...some of your deeper points as well. When you say, I do this, or I do that, remember you haven't even heard me since Llama. That's where I was at Llama.

RAM DASS: Yeah. Yeah.

ELLSBERG: We haven't discussed the practical things tonight. So you haven't heard it. I actually have evolved since that time because of Llama. It doesn't show up in the manuscript because the

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 168

manuscript is based on Llama. That was a defect in the manuscript in my opinion.

RAM DASS: You know, I was responding just now to when I presented that point, you went by it very quickly. Well, I think it's a very critical point.

ELLSBERG: The reason I went by it is that I want... my personal story illustrates that. I wanted to reserve that. OK?

RAM DASS: Oh, OK.

ELLSBERG: And...but since we're on this I want to see if we do differ on this point or not, as I do respond to people. Peter Schragg happens to be one who throughout the trial told me, face it Dan, the people knew all this in their hearts anyway. They knew enough. They don't really care. The American public doesn't care about this stuff. About the Pentagon Papers, specifically. And they want it all done. And what I'm saying is, those people in pursuit of national security...it really had nothing to do with their power to speak of... to kill half a million people in Indonesia, which is what they did. The American people don't know

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 169

that to this day at all that we did that. They are beginning to learn that we run the death squads in El Salvador. Our guys do it.

RAM DASS: See what you are doing is you are officiating at the death of a myth that has fed the nationalistic spirit of this country since its birth. And you must realize, take the responsibility for how people react to that as that myth falls apart. Because we haven't learned...it's just like what happened, now the British empire did it quite gracefully considering what...the myth they had to give up. And there is a precedent for this process. But we are going through this process now, which you are really officiating at by bringing this stuff up so much. And I think that we have to foresee that there is going to be some incredibly irrational denial and reaction against you, not because of you, but because they can't bear to let go of that myth. I've felt that in my heart. I've felt it myself.

ELLSBERG: Let me point to something that...your reaction right now. The fact is that I didn't feel that people held it against me that I brought

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 170

up the Pentagon Papers. And I don't feel the reaction you described. You are attributing, I believe, great shock and resentment and pain at the hearing than I am likely to get than in fact I experience. And I think that's...

RAM DASS: It's good I hear this.

ELLSBERG: Because...because you are thinking that they are...that there is a much more strongly defended personal commitment to these policies by the public. And I'm saying, in fact, there's more of a divergence between what we are actually doing and what...here's the way the divergence is _____. There's an enormous divergence between what the officials say they are doing and what they are doing. Between what they are doing and what we think they are doing. These are three different things. And between what they are doing in each case and what we secretly meant to authorize them to do. Secretly. We did authorize them in our minds to do a little more than the law allows, or than they told us. So a discrepancy between what they are doing and what they told us is not a shock. That's the element

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 171

of...a significant element of truth in what you are saying as I hear it. And by the way, the notion that they will have to cut a few corners does as I say, allow...is why we allow them to give a secrecy system. Now if it were true that under that secrecy system the sky's the limit, they now attempted to do whatever they see as necessary in hopes we won't find out. Now if it were true as many people suppose that they are not doing worse than we are willing to accept then breaching the secrecy would have no great effect. And people would just say to me, you are being a trouble-maker. You're getting in the way here. This is the way it has to be done. In fact, I'm exposing and other people are exposing things that have showed that they are doing far more than the public wants done.

RAM DASS: Yeah, but the effect that it's having... I agree with that. And I think that they could handle it, but the result is a lot of interesting cultural effects in terms of the increasing cynacism. And a lot of differences of...I mean it's interesting what happened to professional sports in the past ten, fifteen years. It's interesting what happened to the blue laws or Sunday as the

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 172

day off for God. Or any of those things. It's interesting what happened to a whole raft of things that were interwoven into a fabric, that it seems to me as that fabric crumbles...what goes with it...it opens a whole lot of Pandora's...no...and then it gets to the point where they do say, anything goes. That's the point. That's really what it's getting to.

ELLSBERG: Now wait. Now wait. You're saying that all of this...there are of course any...

RAM DASS: You know that rape trial in Boston about the five people raping the girl on the pool table. The mob outside the courthouse furious that the system of law had indicted these guys and tried them for this simple thing of forcing a girl down and raping her numerous times.

ELLSBERG: But Ram Dass, you see, I think that's a good example. Rape is all right.

RAM DASS: Massacre isn't.

ELLSBERG: Massacre isn't. And to think then to.. be aware of the...see, because rape is all right,

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 173

they will go on with prosecutorial discretion, with grand jury secrecy, with various kinds of things that allow certain raping of the law to take place.

RAM DASS: I watched...I watched because I know many people who are in the smuggling business.

ELLSBERG: Smuggling is all right.

RAM DASS: Well, but smuggling leads to buying officials. Buying officials leads to...but that's OK, it keeps going. You say, that's OK. Then buying officials leads to leaning a little bit on them when they don't pay up. Then leaning a little bit, well, that's OK. Well, that leads to...well, OK, then that leads to...and it's very interesting how people who...people who....

[MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION ABOUT TAPE RECORDER]

RAM DASS: And I didn't...I've watched them, people that I knew and loved, go further and further and further out, until they could pretty well justify killing somebody and they were doing that.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 174

ELLSBERG: Yeah, but remember, this isn't in the whole...this isn't in the light of openness. This isn't a consequence of openness. You are talking about what proliferates behind that mantle of secrecy. Once one has accepted the shell of secrecy..._____, then these ugly things breed behind it. That was my point. I'm agreeing with you. You were also making a separate point which is a complicated one. Tricky. Which is, as these exposures occur and people get used to the fact of what really is done, there is a dulling and blunting and brutalizing of public consciousness that begins to legitimize some deeper and more awful things. There is a danger there.

RAM DASS: The media feeds that.

ELLSBERG: There is a danger...it's the danger of exposes, of what _____ does and so forth. However, one has to compare that to the other danger of what happens when you don't expose, which you just described, behind the matter. So these are two things.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 175

RAM DASS: But if you look at the paper and you see, rape, rape, rape, rape, pretty soon you say well, rape's OK. That tone. Because everybody's doing it. Because that's the way the news is selected and printed.

ELLSBERG: Well, that's an argument for censorship you see.

RAM DASS: No, well, I'm not arguing anyway. I'm just pointing out that there are events...there are sequences of events in the society that you are unleashing.

ELLSBERG: The other effect that I want to point to which my political life is based on. I mean what do I do after all. I do certain kinds of political actions, not others. And my political life is based on the premise, the assumption with I think a good deal of relevance, that certain kinds of exposures or refocussing of attention, bringing to light, bringing to awareness, things that are not normally thought of, will lead to reduce the incidents, the actual incidents and likelihood of such events. Not merely to legitimize

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 176

them and reinforce them. Obviously there is a dialectic here and it does work both ways.

RAM DASS: Yeah, I understand. Yeah. Yeah.

ELLSBERG: Now, if it were true, and I...I must say...correct me...I thought you were one of those.. I still think, you haven't dissuaded me otherwise. I thought you were one of those who tells me like Peter Scharr (?), that this kind of exposure is not really very politically relevant, because you are only telling the people that the government is doing what they are fully willing to accept anyway. They may not like to hear it or be told or made to feel responsible...but they are going to let it go on.

RAM DASS: No, I think once they hear...

ELLSBERG: They're going to let it go on.

RAM DASS: No, I think they are not ready to deal with it as public...if it is public...I think they are ready to fight if it's public.

ELLSBERG: Also, I think this is where I reacted

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 177

to your reaction just a moment ago. You may overestimate their resistance to hearing it. Your assumption that they would come down on me or be very negative in hearing what I was saying, I say, you overestimate their defenses against hearing it. In my opinion. Is that possible.

RAM DASS: Yeah, but I think I'm not presenting it quite right as their defenses against hearing it. It's what they do with it when they hear it. There's somehow an issue, there's some way in which it...it the breakdown of the system in which they could...if they had a moral code, is what they see, is what is happening.

ELLSBERG: You're assuming that they assume by the way, that when their leaders do it, they do it. That's your perspective.

RAM DASS: Well, since they assented to it.

ELLSBERG: That's your perspective. They present it in secrecy.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 178

RAM DASS: They are not ready to write off the heroes of our country, F.D.R., Truman, and John Kennedy, as being bad guys.

ELLSBERG: But they can believe it of Carter and Reagan.

RAM DASS: Well, that's the new guys, OK. But not those guys. And you've hit every one of those guys.

ELLSBERG: Kennedy has been trashed by all kinds of people.

RAM DASS: But you are bringing it into focus you know. And trashing is one thing...I mean it is still the image that they have been playing on. These are the heroes of the country.

ELLSBERG: No, it affects their heroes, but still the heroes are they, not them. It's not the same as...they accepted it. They didn't know...
OK, let me get to my example.

RAM DASS: Let's see if we have any other issues of content to deal with.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 179

ELLSBERG: It's the case then that I have always been focussed against bombing. And when I was... and against nuclear bombing, both. When I was in... and I would have said that I had never participated directly in furthering the cause of bombing. Now I have taken responsibility, often publicly, for having participated by being in the system and keeping my mouth shut about what I knew was happening. It had not occurred to me to leak, and again when it did occur to me I was against it for a lot of very...period in my life. And I said, and I have said, that I participated as a critic, but that was still participating. It was a role within the system, and I wasn't part of the process. Now people have tried to...have tried to lay on me the notion that I gave the Pentagon Papers out of guilt for what I had done in Vietnam. Well, A, I did not consciously feel guilt at the time of the Pentagon Papers. B, I did not consciously feel guilty over what I had done in Vietnam. My understanding of Vietnam was that I had done what I did in my understanding of the time, in good faith. You know, and when I saw differently I changed what I did. So I didn't feel guilty about that consciously. And to say that someone does

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 180

something out of guilt is a way of putting it down and diminishing its significance, in this country. And certainly diminishing its significance as an example. If you don't feel guilty, you are not called on to do this. I used to say to reject that, and say, the fact is that I don't feel guilty. And I didn't act out of guilt. Patricia once said to me very soberly, you know, you always say that, but the fact is you should feel more guilty than you do. You don't seem to feel guilty but you ought to more than you do. I said, well, my answer to that was, well, you know, that may be but the fact is I don't feel....

RAM DASS: You know you are a very complex motivational person for me. And I...because you would interpret what you do certainly as grounded in rational decision-making. And I don't see that as necessarily the only determinate of your...and you wouldn't even say only, but I would say...

ELLSBERG: There are other motives but the question is what are they?

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 181

RAM DASS: Well, that's an interesting one, and I have an interesting hit by the way. Let me just read you just funny little thing. I was reading a study of Milgram's thing, and that...the quote from Ernest Fitzgerald, Deputy Defense Cost Analyst who sets...who blows the whistle on Hans Poha (?).

ELLSBERG: Whistle blower.

RAM DASS: Yeah. And he talked about those people that do this kind of thing. "What sets them apart and gives them distinction is a sublime innocence, a pure and compelling attachment to school room lessons in morality." And it was far out when I heard that I heard something about you in there.

ELLSBERG: However...

RAM DASS: OK...It's not as simple as that, but I did hear something in there.

ELLSBERG: But let me say that I think that's wrong.

RAM DASS: Good. OK.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 182

ELLSBERG: And not only for me but I will now guess, I will grandiosely guess that it's not only me that that's false about. First, that is...that does express some of the reality of some whistle blowers of whom I know quite a few now. It does express a certain reality, a sense of outrage, a sense that they don't want to participate in something, that it goes against their code. That it is simply wrong and they will not do it. That expresses the subjective experience of a number of these people at the time that they do it. And very much mine... I would say mine up until this moment. I have a new perception.

RAM DASS: OK.

ELLSBERG: Now by the way, you can well exaggerate the simplicity of their perception. Some people thought, have often said, many people have said, Harrison Saltry said, various other people have said, he just couldn't stand the lying. Well that's ridiculous. I'd been in government for 15 years. Every month of that time I was conscious of being within a system of lying. I accepted that for a variety of reasons. Either justified, or if not justified, acceptable. The lying, actually, there

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 183

was no...there was nothing new about the lying.

It was what they were lying about, it was crimes that they were about to commit that I wanted to stop. It was what they were doing, not what they were saying about it, that concerned me. And it was ^{not} just past lies that I was concerned about.

It was future crimes that I was trying to prevent, and that was very clear to me. And as I think I've said, you saw it in the manuscript, I interpolated it. I have some interest as a historian. It's not my profession but I have a historical interest in setting the record straight. But I would never go to jail for 150 years to set the record straight.

I was trying to change the history of the future perhaps by bringing these past things to light.

So the morality involved in it had to do with the morality of murder, not with the morality of lying. So...to see me so simply, you know you

could be a little too simple. Now still I would have said, it was a simple reaction. This was

wrong. It should be stopped. I didn't...I saw that before...Let me now conjecture. I've had...

why did that fellow...I'm going to give you a memory which came to me. Why was the memory accessible to me now? Well, partly because I've been coming to an interpretation in this course, including the

very last lecture, which is this. That certain acts actually are focussed on revenge, it so happens. That the acts of revenge may not, and I don't see that as central to what I did though, maybe you know that. But acts of revenge which often are very reckless, and suicidal, are undertaken not as an immediate reaction to a humiliation or an impression, an offense committed against you. But to a sequence of events in which certain earlier oppression or demands were followed by a period of shameful submission for fear of guilt, fear of expressing one's anger at the perpetrator who happened to be your parent as a child or some other authority. So you could not express that anger or that humiliation at that time. You went along with it. And you may even have identified with the aggressor. You go along. It's later, when something else trips it that you react not only to a new aggression but to your whole radius or shell.

RAM DASS: Is this historical...I don't want to interrupt.

ELLSBERG: No wait. This is very important and not

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 185

so obvious. Not only to the old one and not only to the new one. But very much to your rage at yourself for having participated or even for having given in on the old thing. I think that's by the way a very unusual perception. I got it from Copeland, an article by Copeland, who is commenting on an...a very early article by Franz Alexander.

RAM DASS: I hear you. Yeah. It's a point I made earlier. It's a resistance to your own reactions to a situation. Not just the react...the resistance to the situation but your resistance to your own reaction. That you can't handle it. You don't really want to deal with what you reacted to it with.

ELLSBERG: So the person reacts finally, very... with very great...Let's suggest then if these people have this very simple reaction. Let me...I think this is empirical conjecture.

RAM DASS: Oh undoubtably.

ELLSBERG: That the conjecture would be that this is

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 186

not the first time they've hit the situation. There were earlier times and they may unconsciously not be so happy with the way they reacted in the past.

RAM DASS: I agree. I feel it myself.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I'd like to ask you that. Are you agreeing because it merely seems to be....

RAM DASS: No, I can feel it in myself.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I feel you have had this experience.
OK.

RAM DASS: Sure. I can feel ways in which I didn't act, because I was afraid to act, because there were times when my insecurity about social acceptance made me much more...do things which now I consider were immoral acts. See, I don't know about you but I consider that I have done immoral acts. I think I have done things which increased suffering and I think I did them out of...at that time, just out of sloppiness and the way I played games, but...

ELLSBERG: Did you do some things...I won't ask for examples now, but the question I'm raising is did

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 187

you maybe do some things that you were ashamed of at the time. It goes without saying everybody has but serious things that you were ashamed of at the time.

RAM DASS: Yes. I was ashamed of at the time, and I didn't act.

ELLSBERG: What I'm saying is, that can give rise to guilt...guilt and shame, shame, let's say. Let's make the distinction, shame...

RAM DASS: An image of myself which colors the way I am when I approach any situation where a moral issue comes up.

ELLSBERG: This bears I think on a question of whether guilt can have all kinds of negative, and positive and various kinds of effects.

RAM DASS: That's called guilt though.

ELLSBERG: Yeah, but I'm going to say, maybe it can be a useful motivator at some point. I think in your perspective terms...am I wrong? You would be very dubious about guilt as a _____?

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 188

RAM DASS: Well, to intentionally use it in another person I would consider a wrong action. I think many actions are performed out of guilt and many of them are socially beneficial.

ELLSBERG: OK.

RAM DASS: But I would never use it to play upon somebody's guilt to get them to act.

ELLSBERG: Right.

MAN'S VOICE: There's a distinction there between remorse and guilt.

ELLSBERG: Yeah, that is good. And his...anyway... I...I was talking to a guy named John Stockwell, about three days ago. Does anybody know that name, John Stockwell? All right. He's a CIA guy. A little bit younger than us, but not much, about five years younger. He went to..he was in the Marines just after me, in fact right after me, in Kap Dujong. He's a missionary...of missionary parents from the Belgian Congo. And he went back to Africa for the CIA, and was in charge of the covert operations in Angola. The ones that Kissinger wanted to continue.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 189

He broke the story, he was in charge of them. He came back and wrote a book about them. Did not _____ the CIA, totally exposed them. He has come to a very radical perception of the CIA and what he was doing. He just, by the way, last week, did a fast over Easter Weekend in opposition in Austin Texas where he lives with a dozen other people. Because it's Austin, because of who he was, they in fact got international attention. People in Europe heard about it. And we got it in the Chronicle and so forth, and he was quoted as saying, the CIA is the gestapo. And he got a lot of...for this fast...Anyway I was talking to him, it so happens that he's probably as close to me in actually, the degree of break that he made as any other person, in fact I would say, he's the only other one that broke out this much. Except Agee. And...so in the course of talking to him we were talking about things we had seen and done in the past. Let me tell you one thing he said, which was very, very useful. I was talking about what I was talking about in the course, about the way people do these things, and conceal from themselves what they were doing. He said, how they

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 190

got to do massacres and stay in El Salvador. He said, oh, he's been in that position, as CIA Station Chief. He said, you give the people these explosions, he says, and you tell them, he didn't say this had happened to him personally, but it's part of his professional...the guys in El Salvador, or in Honduras, will give the countries, he's talking about the countries, explosives. And they'll say, now these are for military targets. They are not to be used to kill women or children, no buses, no massacres. Right? You understand that? That's the only condition under which you are given these, given the explosives. So they go off and the next day you read about the bus that was just blown up. He says, you read that, and this is what you say, god dammit, goddamit. He says you read that, you take off from the office for the day, you go home, you take a stiff drink, you kick the dog, you snarl at your wife, and you say, these fucking cocksuckers. You give them the goddam stuff. I told them it was not to be used on that. Absolutely not to be used on that. What kind of fucking business am I in anyway. Godddamit. You go back to the office the next day, requisition more explosives. Go to these guys and you say, now you fucking assholes. This is fucking not to be used on civilians. You do it again and it's your ass. Right?

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 191

And then they do it again and they....

RAM DASS: See that's....that's a hell of a book just in chronicles of the way it goes further out with people. Because that's the way society gets conscious of what they are doing to themselves, by chronicaling exactly that kind of storyline.

ELLSBERG: Well, this is beautiful, because what he added to...to my awareness of it, and remember I had not been in covert operations before that, and I wasn't in the CIA. So I hadn't had that experience, but I could have easily imagined it. That...the part that he was adding which is a totally sincere anger, and fury about what had happened. And then the job goes on...

MAN'S VOICE: So he protects the deception in the context of self-deception.

ELLSBERG: Of course. Part of the self-deception is an emotional reaction of horror at this...

WOMAN'S VOICE: Remarkable.

ELLSBERG: So that story, _____ to the following story for me. I said, I haven't told this to many

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 5, PAGE 192

people because I'm embarrassed by it. It's a story that I'm...you know, I was ashamed of. And the fact...it turned out, I just finally told it to Tricia the other night. I had never told it to Tricia.

WOMAN'S VOICE: You're kidding.

ELLSBERG: But I've told it to a few people in this or that connection. But I said, but it embarrassed me and I thought of it when I wrote my book, but I said constantly in the book, I'm not going to tell the worst things that I did. I'll just tell the best things I did, they are bad enough. And...but, actually this is the one thing in my mind that really embarrassed me, you know, it was an experience. So I told Stockwell this and my brother too.

BEGIN SIDE 6:

ELLSBERG: OK. I had proposed the prospect of the bombing all the Fall of 1964. And had in fact written the only report on the proposal of the bombing by Lowell Rasta(?). I wrote a review of that which said that it would be perceived as a...first it

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 193

wouldn't work, it was wrong, everything was wrong with it. And I added, it would be perceived by many and with strong grounds as not only a violation of international law on our part, but that we were the ones doing the aggression. This was Walt Rostow's answer to aggression from the North. And I said, if we did this, I said we would be seen as the aggressors. I didn't say, we would be the aggressors. One doesn't say that. But it was the...that's the only document I ever saw that brought it in by the back door that way by saying it would be foreseen as aggression. And I argued for it directly again in other contexts, that it was bad. My boss thought it was bad also. He never said a word for it. It so happened that after the Tonkin Gulf, the ambassador and MacVie, the Military Assistance Commander in Vietnam, wanted there to be new appraisal raids. And they wanted a major campaign of bombing to get started, later called the Rolling Thunder campaign, which would not be related to specific atrocities or provocations but would be a steady pressure campaign. Well, they missed, the Viet Cong hit our base in Bienwa, but that was just three days before the election. So there was a...so Johnson

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 194

refused to retaliate. Then they hit again a brig's POQ, and blew it up, but that was Christmas Eve, and Johnson didn't choose to make that the Christmas present for the...a big reprisal like the Tonkin Gulf. Then they hit Ple Ku in February, and this was now time to go. But George Bundy was in Saigon at that moment with my boss, John McNaught. And Bundy had been criticizing the bombing, had been against the bombing, which MacNamara was for. MacNamara was trying to get a steady program started. And McNaught, my boss, was against that, I was against that. But that was what MacNamara wanted. By virtue of being in Ple Ku, he went to Ple Ku that day, to see the wreckage, to see the people killed and all that. George Bundy sent a cable back saying, this is the time, not only to retaliate, but to launch a steady program of pressure. And so he came aboard with MacNamara at that point. Actually that was about the only major thing that George Bundy did, was to join MacNamara at that point, because he let MacNamara run the show. So he really didn't do much with Vietnam. But he did that, which is of some significance. We read that cable in the Pentagon and we said, ah ha, Bundy is aboard now. That's of some significance. Because it was important to

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 195

the president to have all of his advisors pushing us, if he was ever going to do it. Three days. So we had a reprisal ready. I was up all that night, and like Tonkin Gulf, I was up all night watching the reports come back of the planes and what happened, so I could report on it the next morning. Got no sleep that night. And then there were reactions to the press and there were all kinds of things for the next day or two. Meanwhile MacNamara was urgently trying to get the president to launch a steady program of _____, which Johnson was refusing to do, either because he didn't want to do it, or he wanted to be pressed into it a little more by MacNamara. It wasn't clear. But it seemed to me then that he didn't want to do it and I respected Johnson for that.

WOMAN'S VOICE: Was MacNamara alone in his pressure?

ELLSBERG: Among the civilians. Dean Rusk was... managed to keep unknown. No one knows what his position was at that time. Bundy had just come aboard on that. Of course the Joint Chiefs were pressing it. And the Ambassador and MacVie.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 196

MAN'S VOICE: In reference to the _____ British bombing in World War II, it shows that major bombing was not...

ELLSBERG: You see Rostow was one of the people on that study. _____ was one of the main people on that study. But this was for different purposes. This was actually quite explicitly for purposes of coercion. Not affecting their industry. They didn't have any. It was torture. It was as Patricia later called it, torture. Which someone was a word that none of us managed to perceive through all those years. It was torturing a nation. So...we saw it as coercion. So...well, actually I asked a group of people, what's a word for coercion where you are actually causing pain, as opposed say to the Cuban Missile Crisis where we didn't fight any shots.

WOMAN'S VOICE: Torture.

ELLSBERG: Well nobody ever came up with the word. And Patricia was the first woman to read the Pentagon Papers. Who read this stuff and said this is the language of torture. It was right there.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 197

None of us had ever seen that word. So...as I say, a couple of days went by with almost no sleep. On the third day, I...an odd incident happened, which is a little extenuated, that's why it occurred to me after I had had the basic memory here. As far as my state of mind. Somebody came into the office and was talking to me about Ple Ku. Because I was writing notes for a study in crises, I turned to my typewriter and wrote the note...I said, wait a minute, there is somebody in my office who is talking to me about Ple Ku. I know that something very significant happened in Ple Ku recently, but I cannot remember what it was. Because that was a common crisis decision-making phenomenon that I saw in other people. Just a beautiful example. It was that memory, you know, like you mention a name, I know I've heard that name before, and then it turns out to be your sister. In this case, one often forgot...I remember Bobby Kennedy once said to me, there was something at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis that it was happening at just the same time, as I was interviewing him. He said, what was it? What was it? When was Vienna? I said, Vienna was a year and a half earlier than that. Well then, what was it? Well, this happened right in the

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 198

crisis. So I was in this strange state of consciousness. That day the VietCong hit Quin Yan, another base, a very stupidly _____. I think it was one of the major strategic air bases in world. They must have thought it was inevitable that it would get bombed anyway, so it didn't matter what they did. Actually it mattered enormously. Because they had stayed away from our bases, all through 61, 62, 63, 64, they didn't kill any Americans. All of a sudden they started killing Americans. It was very stupid. Because it wasn't that easy to get the bombing started. OK, so I was given the job now to go down to...get some data. Actually it was George Bundy's idea. We want data on atrocities that the VietCong have just committed that will be our excuse for retaliating. But we want atrocities to show that there is a pattern of atrocities here to which it is necessary to respond with a pattern of bombing so we don't have to do it tit for tat on an ad hoc basis. But MacNamara wanted what George Bundy...in fact, when George Bundy proposed in his cable that we begin putting out schedules of recent atrocities to show that it's a continuing pattern to which we can respond with a continuing pattern. So he said, go down and get us some atrocities. Now they were real atrocities, the Viet Cong were always

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS

1 MAY 1984

SIDE 6, PAGE 199

conducting. In some cases were the killing of village chiefs who were oppressors of various kinds. Secret police. But others were...they occasionally killed school children on buses. They would kill a province chief and all his family and this would have been in front of the... the available people and so forth. However, we never collected those on a steady basis. So I went down to the Joint War Room, put in an open line, put in a call to Saigon. I had never called Saigon before. And I talked to Saigon for 12 hours. All night for about 8 hours. It was daytime there. It was 12:00 there, it was midnight here. So all night from about 9:00 to morning I was trying to get atrocities out of this guy. And he said, well, we don't collect them that way. The Viet Cong just tell us that month there were so many kidnappings or so many killings or whatnot. They didn't even do it by month. They would just have sort of sheets for reports. I said, no, we need recent ones that will show a pattern. So I pulled this out of him hour by hour. Go to this Ministry, that Ministry, call this guy, see what you can get. And then he said, then the report came in and he said, well, here's one. Here's a good one. Two

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 200

advisors were killed at a little outpost near Quin Yon, two American advisors. And they seemed to have been mutilated before they were killed, there were stab wounds, they were punctured with something and it looked as though they had a rope around their neck and they were dragged behind a vehicle. And I said, that's what we want. That's what I'm supposed to get. More like that. Well, there weren't any more like that. But I said, give me the details, and I want blood. I had to have the detail. That's what MacNamara wanted. So at about 5:00, 6:00 in the morning I came up in the war room with this stuff and wrote it up. And all, so this, _____ some of the stuff. And there was an 8:00 meeting at the White House. So at about 7:30 I was giving McNaughten this report, and he was running down to MacNamara to go over it with him. And I said, to him to the effect, look, I think this is what he wants. Because this...he can put it to Johnson. This is what he wants to do, I could have understood all the time that we don't think this is a good idea, but this is what he wants. And he can tell Johnson that this is the kind of stuff that they may quickly leak to the public. And if they realize that this is happening to Americans over there, because

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 201

it was certainly unusual, that will get a lot of attention. And if he doesn't respond he will be under the challenge as to why he's not willing to defend our Americans.

RAM DASS: That's the way to get to Johnson.

ELLSBERG: That's the way to get to Johnson, yeah. So MacNamara comes back three hours later and says, Johnson has given his OK. We're going to go ahead with the program on the bombing, says McNaughten. And McNaughten said, MacNamara said to tell you your material was very useful. There were only two times at the Pentagon other than when I'd worked directly for MacNamara writing speeches. There were only two times that I was acknowledged that anything I did had an effect. One was a very big one where I wrote a report which persuaded MacNamara to give up his desire to mine Haiphong. And he never did do it. That he shouldn't mine Haiphong. It was a very big report. He said, tell Dan, you know, he's convinced me. And this was the other time. What he gave me...was, well, so you can see why I wouldn't be eager to tell that. Except that the next day after I told that to Stockwell, I woke up realizing

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 202

that was not just a minor lapse, you know, of doing something that I didn't believe in. That was the day we started bombing. That was it.

RAM DASS: That was it. The beginning of that whole sequence.

ELLSBERG: We dropped 7 1/2 million tons of bombs after that. And...as Pat pointed out, and by the way, who knows how critical it was, but it probably had some little influence at that moment. With MacNamara pressing for it the likelihood that it would have started next week or the week after was very good too. It's just...I'll never know it for sure. And if I hadn't done it, someone else would have done it. So all that's true. However, this wasn't something to be embarrassed about. This was something to feel guilty about. This wasn't a small lapse. And moreover, I knew at the time that what MacNamara was trying to do was wrong. Now what I was doing of course, myself, collecting atrocity figures, I wasn't making them up. Or I wasn't making lies or anything. But I was deliberately giving him what he asked for. I could have said...that...

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 203

RAM DASS: There's nothing. There's no pattern,
no way.

ELLSBERG: Ah, don't ask me to do that. Fuck that.
And I had...I did do things like that still. Often.
And moreover it wasn't likely that I would have
done that, said no, six months earlier with the
Tonkin Gulf, because the Tonkin Gulf came the night
that I joined the Pentagon. So I was so new that
the idea...I still had to find out what was going
on here. What was done, and what was sort of a...
but six months later, I knew enough. And I could
well say, well now, how could I have done that.
That's why I was glad to remember a day later,
among other things I was totally exhausted. You
know, I really was at that point. I was in the
midst of this crisis. I had resisted so often,
if you want to know the motives on this program,
this kind of thing, that I, without remembering
it, I'm sure I was glad to do something helpful
to MacNamara, he asked me to do it. To show I
could do it. That I could be helpful if he wants
our aid. Ask me to do it, I'll do it. Though
actually, strictly speaking there's no real excuse.
That should have rung an alarm bell on me. I was

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 204

against that program. Now personally, the significance...there are some ramifications out of that. First I've managed to repress the significance of that for...well, 19 years. That happened 19 years ago. At the time the full significance was not apparent.

RAM DASS: I understand. Because you didn't know how long it was going to last.

ELLSBERG: In the course of the bombing, I never looked back and said...

RAM DASS: Back and said, I started that.

ELLSBERG: If I did think of this episode, I merely would have said, to reveal the psychology of it, I would have said, that I shouldn't have done. That's one thing I shouldn't have done, and I feel bad about it.

RAM DASS: You would have kicked the dog.

ELLSBERG: What?

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 205

RAM DASS: Kicked the dog.

ELLSBERG: Right. But I didn't face how bad it was even at the time. Moreover it didn't change...it didn't...I still would have generalized... I never helped the bombing along, I was nothing but a critic. I just forgot the significance of that episode, which was helping it along.

RAM DASS: That's how it works.

ELLSBERG: What?

RAM DASS: That's how it works. That's why you are...

ELLSBERG: Well, that's one way of putting it.

RAM DASS: ...You are in such an interesting position for communicating to the society.

ELLSBERG: That's one way it worked. You see I always distinguish myself from the people who weren't able to see that the bombing was wrong either. But that doesn't help me out in this case, because

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 206

I did see it was wrong and I did it anyway.
It is very comparable to what George Bundy
did at Ple Ku. He came aboard on that one...it
wasn't an important incident.

RAM DASS: So he did as much as you did.

ELLSBERG: It's evidence that I understood this
better than I did consciously. I never...I did
not choose to work on '64, '65, in the Pentagon
Papers. Instead I worked on '61, with the conscious
explanation that that was new to me, and I didn't
want to go over...hash over old material, '64,'65.
Nor did I write about it in my book when it would
have been very appropriate. And I would say that
when I gave the Pentagon Papers there were things
in my mind that I felt I was ready to be punished
for. Mainly that I was...I was able to do an act
that was not just an ordinary act, but that was
going to put me in prison forever, in part...of
course in part because the act needed doing, and
it might help, and it was important and so forth.
And I was in a position to do it. And all the
conscious reasons that I felt up to now. This
week for the first time I acknowledged to myself
possibly that I've always denied to myself before,

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 207

that I was ready to go to prison. At all. But I did feel, let's just put it, to say the least... that prison held fewer terrors for me. It was less negative than it might be. Because I was going to wipe the slate clean of a lot of things, no doubt. Some of which I may not have been, not as bad as this. But this is one thing.

RAM DASS: You are just seeing the tip of the iceberg of the way that your consciousness works in terms of historical guilt.

ELLSBERG: Now, one thing that it does tell me is that to perceive things as crime or as evils, which maybe I'm wrong, I thought you resistant to see certain human actions as evil.

RAM DASS: No, I don't see them as evil, but I see the actions as evil. Sure.

ELLSBERG: OK, the actions as evil. I'm mistaken then. I thought you did resist that Gandhi perspective.

RAM DASS: No, no, no, no.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 208

ELLSBERG: And it seemed to me that to do that and even to act out of guilt in part, but also... see, my conscious feeling at the time was...I now see what we did as very wrong and I don't want us to keep doing it, or do it again. And that I think was the major reason. But I think that it is probably true that my calmness at the prospect of prison was that I was going to get rid of various kinds of guilt that I had.

RAM DASS: Well, we all have that. I mean that's...

ELLSBERG: By the way, Pat said to see that to reveal this would probably not be as startling to people as I might think, because most people assume that I have all kinds of thing like that on my conscience.

RAM DASS: Yes. Exactly. They would.

ELLSBERG: And I've never rejected that notion, but when it's come up I've always said, no, I didn't... I didn't kill anybody in Vietnam to my knowledge. I didn't do anything...

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 209

RAM DASS: They can't assume that you weren't part of a system that you therefore were willing...

ELLSBERG: Yeah, well, I'm more conscious of having been an internal critic than they realize.

RAM DASS: Yeah, but I think in this discussion that we are having about the incredible value to a society to see in the way there is a step like process of giving away one's moral judgement into the role, this is these...kind of examples are tremendously powerful to show why the check and balance system isn't working very well at this moment because of secrecy. Which is I think a critical issue.

ELLSBERG: One of the...one of the things that I...I would now guess that...first, anyway, one has to see right away, it certainly wipes out or erodes the we/they aspect between me and these other guys. Because...for instance, I've always... well, for example, I've always...I mean George Bundy isn't actually the very best example, because in the heat of Ple Ku he probably did feel like us. The exact example was George Ball, who was against our involvement all together, and by virtue

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 210

of that was given the job. First, we'll let you be a dove. We'll let you be a critic. You're going to keep doing it. But we have a little job that we'd like you to do. Second, he was selected for this job I'm sure, because he was the best person to do it, because he was against the war. And that was to convince Fulbright, that Fulbright should be the senate floor manager of the Tonkin Gulf resolution. So Ball was given this little job. You're the guy. There's something that we want you to do. It's not that explicit. Here's something I, the President, want you to do. You go tell your friend, Fulbright...

WOMAN'S VOICE: It was in fact Ball that convinced Fulbright?

ELLSBERG: Ball did it. Maybe nobody else could have done it.

RAM DASS: Everybody's got something on their head.

ELLSBERG: Now, that one is very big.

RAM DASS: You can't play in the big ball game without... being a participant....

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 211

ELLSBERG: I would guess in other words that the guys in there. It's true I always knew there were people like myself in this all who were good guys like myself, or were good critics and did this and that. We did other things that we would now criticize, but which at the time seemed all right. For example, I often admit, equally seriously, my advice wasn't called for in this area much, so I haven't thought about it much. But I was in fact in favor...once we had committed ourselves to the bombing, I was then in favor of backing it up with some troops. I was a Marine. I didn't have the same feeling about troops as I had about bombing. But the fact is that I did... some troops, I didn't...so I was one of the few who was not against putting Marines in. And I admit that is an enormous error, but to my mind I thought it was all right at the time. That was a mistake. I made a terrible mistake. That's different of course. But I can now state, even people who could see that certain things were wrong, it is probably true that they have things that they have repressed as I have. And the effort that...of keeping that repressed, the effort of doing that of course keeps it locked in.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 212

RAM DASS: Of course, exactly. That's the whole key.

MAN'S VOICE: That's the difference between guilt and remorse. Guilt is dirty.

RAM DASS: Yeah, it's locked in. It's locked in with resistance to acknowledging that place in yourself.

ELLSBERG: Wait. I'm not clear what the distinction is.

MAN'S VOICE: Well, when you are coming from a space of guilt, and feeling badly about past actions, you are very much locked into the sense that I did this, and it was wrong. Whereas, coming from a space of remorse, there's a more open understanding that that's who I was then, I'm somebody different now. I've learned from that...

WOMAN'S VOICE: You're forgiven. Isn't it. Self-forgiven.

MAN'S VOICE: That may be. Or at least allows it.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 213

WOMAN'S VOICE: Allows for it.

ELLSBERG: All right. If that's the distinction you are making I recognize the distinction. I feel remorse about having allowed myself to be fooled on the missile gap, on having worked on plans and that person. I feel remorse about my actions on the Marines, on _____ the Marines. I feel guilt about doing what I knew at the time was wrong, doing it. In order to give the boss what he wanted. To show I could do it. It wasn't trying to do my job. I wanted to show that I was capable of...I could give him, I was capable of doing what he wanted. And....I didn't feel... I didn't feel, that's not remorse. I knew who I was then. I did it then. I would have to say by the way, I have no basis for assurance you know that I...if I could do it then then I can do it now.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I don't think so.

RAM DASS: Oh, do it in another way. I mean

ELLSBERG: I don't want to bet anymore that way.

I've just learned something. I would have said that

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 214

I was not capable of doing that then. That's how I remembered it. That's reaching. Memory says, I did this. My conscience says, I could not have done that. In the end, memory yields.

WOMAN'S VOICE: Ain't it the truth.

MAN'S VOICE: Like _____ says, I think he says my pride says, not my conscience. Pride wins.

ELLSBERG: I could not have done that.

WOMAN'S VOICE: I'm not sure that the translations may not differ....

ELLSBERG: Memory yields.

RAM DASS: Are you tired? Do you feel that we've touched on some of the issues?

WOMAN'S VOICE: Oh yes. Don't you....

RAM DASS: If we didn't, we're not going to do it this year.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 215

ELLSBERG: It's a heuristic principle almost. You are going to go wrong if you emphasize the theyness, the difference of those guys from us. And I definitely acknowledge the heuristic value since our Llama trip, or exploring, are they different, in what ways are they alike.

RAM DASS: I think the way he exactly is exploring that, I think gives you a doorway into communication with yourself as you are finding out. And also thus as you free that up with them. Because I'm sure the denial in you made you have to see them more in a certain way. That's the way the whole process works. And as you acknowledge your own... you know, humanity.

ELLSBERG: No, no, it fixes my perception of them, yes. And allows communication and so forth.

RAM DASS: Yeah, that's just the way that process works. You see it beautifully. That's a good example.

ELLSBERG: And now if I may give you the other...the lesson that I would like you to hear. No, it's the

end or near the end. But I wanted to say what I thought the lesson on the other side is. That you like...I think most people, I mean most experts, most everything. If you introspect and empathize from your personal relationships to the behavior of humans in institutions you can easily be lead astray in some serious ways. That's all I need to say, because you will underestimate certain probabilities. Without saying they are zero, but you will underestimate them. You will underestimate certain urgencies. You will mispredict. And I repeat, you know, not only you, but most people...and the other reality... now you could say to me very well, I can introspect from my organizational knowledge to there, and that's what I'm doing. I...that was not me doing that. That was me as the assistant to John McNaughten doing it. And I'll say this. If I could do that given what I felt then there are no limits to what I could do under the right circumstances. And I would go pretty far to say no limits to what most people in those jobs could do. Which I already knew but I knew it about them. Now I know it about me.

RAM DASS: And that makes a difference.

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 217

ELLSBERG: It does make a difference.

RAM DASS: It makes a difference. It softens the whole way of being with them in a way that their heart, and something can happen. It does open a... open a space.

ELLSBERG: I'll conjecture that my horror at what they were doing, is in part a clinging to the perception that I would not have done that. Therefore they must be different from me.

RAM DASS: Yeah. Which now you see was rooted....

ELLSBERG: And the need...the need for that perception is to help repress the memory...did I do that. I could not have done that.

RAM DASS: Oh Daniel. Oh Daniel.

ELLSBERG: I could not have done that. Therefore they must be different from me since they did do it.

MAN'S VOICE: Because you told them not to use the dynamite and blow up the children. You are the

ELLSBERG/RAM DASS
1 MAY 1984
SIDE 6, PAGE 218

guy who told them, don't use it.

WOMAN"S VOICE: No. That was different.

ELLSBERG: This is...this is...the analogy would be I repressed the fact that I gave them some more dynamite the next day. The first dynamite I can remember was no problem. I didn't want them to do it. I told them not to do it. I repressed the fact that I went back and gave them some more dynamite.

END.